

# THE MONTH

JANUARY 1960

**AFRICAN TRANSITION**

PAUL CRANE

**RICHARD ROLLE OF HAMPOLE**

E. J. ARNOULD

**THE STANE STREET**

ELIZABETH BELLOC

**THE REIGN OF ELIZABETH**

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# AFRICAN TRANSITION

By

PAUL CRANE

THE STRENGTH of African national feeling is something which the most superficial of travellers to that continent could hardly fail to notice. So, too, is the inevitability of its outcome. The time has long since passed when the wisdom of granting independence to any English-speaking African territory could serve as a profitable subject for discussion. The question is no longer whether self-government should be granted. It is hardly even a matter of when and how, for time is running out fast in Africa. The clock can no longer be halted nor the trend reversed. Whether we like it or not, Britain's remaining African territories are due very soon for independence under governments elected, in the first instance, on a basis of universal suffrage.

Does this mean the abandonment of their inhabitants after independence to absolutist rule? The question is blunt, but it must be asked. Only the politically naïve would think it outrageous and their numbers now are not what they were. For the more discerning, single-chamber democracy resting on a basis of popular sovereignty is seen as conferring on the representatives of the people unlimited power. It is only a step from this to the concept of the popular leader as the incarnation of his people's will, able, in their name, to rule his country without restraint. As a popular sovereign, it is his right to give orders to all and receive them from none. His power is boundless precisely because the people have placed him on the pinnacle from which he wields it. Under such circumstances, the function of an opposition can be made to appear not merely pointless, but obstructive of the popular will. Lesser organisations within a country fall into the same category. They dam the stream of communication which should flow freely from ruler to ruled and vice versa. The plural society is unthinkable as an expression of popular sovereignty whose trend is towards the monolithic and the inclination of

whose government is to absorb all in the name of the people. Within itself it contains no inherent principle capable of restraining it from so doing.

In the West, political attitudes built round the age-old tradition of the Common Law have served as a rein on this process. Though in some cases the rein has slackened, the rules of the democratic game continue to serve as a not ineffective restraint on the arbitrary abuse of governmental power. Their survival is a tribute to the durability of the attitude which upholds them, an attitude deriving directly from the Christian concept of man enshrined in the Common Law. On this reckoning, democracy as we know it to-day in its non-arbitrary form—what is referred to indifferently as the democratic attitude, democracy or democratic values—does not represent an evolution, but a survival. Modern democracy is still capable of withstanding the absolutist tendencies of popular sovereignty because the rules of the game are still observed. But men to-day no longer understand why, at bottom, the rules should be kept. The game has become the thing. How long it will remain so is matter for dispute.

What does seem indisputable is the *naïveté* of those who assume that democracy has only to be set in train anywhere for there to be born in new and untried participants the instinct to obey its rules. Unthinkingly, they identify the installation in a country of the democratic apparatus with the automatic transmission to its people of the mental attitudes necessary to restrain its absolutist tendencies. There is no reason why this should be so. By contrast, there is every reason why the coming of popular democracy to a country unacquainted with the tradition of Christian politics should result in some form of popular autocracy. Without cynicism, one may expect something of the sort to happen in Britain's English-speaking African territories after their attainment of independence. The process will come naturally to a people for whom the leader is all, a symbol of national independence. Devotion to the ballot box in contemporary Africa must not be taken as an endorsement of what is called the democratic way of life. It is regarded, rather, as a heaven-sent means of getting the British out.

If this analysis is correct, Britain's predicament in Africa is, at first sight, obvious enough. To withhold the grant of self-government is to invite popular explosion. To proceed with it

is to risk consigning whole peoples—to say nothing of European minorities—to the arbitrariness of absolutist rule. What, under the circumstances, is this country to do? The question is superfluous. Britain has no choice. There is only one thing she can do and that is to proceed with the grant of self-government. National feeling is so strong in her dependent African territories as to make certain the disaster of a popular explosion if she stays to rule them directly beyond her time. She would then be faced with the situation which confronts Belgium now in the Congo—forced to depart prematurely, leaving behind bitterness, the likelihood of internecine violence and the tragedy of a task undone. Britain's choice is not between staying in Africa as a ruler and withdrawing from it. I was going to say it is between being forced out of Africa as an enemy and parting from it as a friend. But, on second thoughts, I believe that contrast is not quite correct. The prospect is more hopeful, the reward of prompt action more promising than that. Britain's choice, I am sufficiently optimistic to say, is between being driven from Africa as an enemy and remaining in it as a friend. The latter is the obvious objective.

It can be achieved to the extent that Britain sees her mission in Africa as advisory. In that capacity, her presence is still desired. As a ruler, she is no longer wanted. The implication is clear. Britain must substitute responsible government for direct rule in her remaining African territories. That means African ministers responsible to African legislatures elected on a basis of universal adult male suffrage. The task of this country's representatives on the spot will be to serve African governments in a capacity that is at once subordinate and advisory. If they do this Britain need have little fear for the future. The sting will be drawn from African politics. Confidence will be raised to the level happily prevailing in Tanganyika. The transition to self-government will be made in peace. Once these countries have been granted responsible government as it will be granted to Tanganyika later this year, I am not inclined to believe that their African administrations will be any too anxious to rush into independence. What Africans want at the moment is responsibility for the management of their own affairs. They know they have much to learn in order to use it effectively. For the time being, they still remain anxious that we should help them

with advice and service. What they do not want is that we should keep them in a subordinate capacity and continue to rule them directly. We must become the subordinates now.

There are many who will consider this suggestion bold to the point of outlandishness. The African, it will be said, is not yet ready for such a step. He is unfit to govern himself. Again, the question of white and Asiatic minorities will be raised. Are they to be left to the caprice of popularly elected African legislatures? Finally, it will be asked what right Britain has to rush her African subjects into self-government, since African popular democracy is liable to find expression in absolutist forms.

To all these questions it would seem, once again, that there is only one answer. Britain has no alternative. Her presence as a direct ruler is no longer wanted in Africa. Like the Belgians in the Congo, she will reap only bitterness and the chagrin of forced departure by staying on in a capacity in which she is no longer desired. Under such circumstances, one might well ask what will happen to minorities whose interests, with the best of intentions, Britain will have sought to protect until the moment of her forced withdrawal. It is difficult to see that they will be treated with consideration by the government of an African country that has forced its way through to independence in an atmosphere of violence and hate. The conclusion seems inescapable. It is precisely to preserve the legitimate interests of minority groups that Britain should make the transition to responsible government in her dependent African territories as rapidly as possible. And she should do so, even though it means the exclusion of minority representatives from national legislatures. Understandably enough, the African is suspicious of the partial franchise. For him, it is a means to the preservation of white supremacy. No amount of explanation will remove this suspicion. In his mind, anything but universal suffrage is incompatible with his concept of responsible government. Hence, nothing but harm will be done if the grant of self-government is conditioned by a weighted franchise. Minority interests will not be preserved in that way. The only sound procedure is to rely on a spell of responsible government to take from the African the frustration and bitterness he feels when confronted with the privileged position of minority groups. What he hates above all is the thought that the privileges of a few show him up, by



contrast, as a second-class citizen in his own country. Responsible government on a basis of universal suffrage will do much to remove this poison from his mind. The task will be completed if, *pari passu* with the coming of responsible government, there are discernible the beginnings, at least, of what must be a pronounced change of outlook with regard to the African on the part of minority groups.

Under this kind of development one cannot promise minorities an easy time. What one can say is that, if the nettle is grasped bravely at this point, their legitimate interests have a very good chance of survival. But, if Britain preserves direct rule beyond due time in order to protect the interests of minority groups, she will end by being forced out herself, and those she has sought to protect will be sent packing with her. The only wise policy is to proceed now with the bold grant of responsible government to dependent African territories.

The same line of answer can be given to those who say that the African is not yet ready for responsible government, nor the adequate direction of his country's economic affairs. "If only they would give us time," an earnest Rhodesian said to me recently. I was forced to reply that there was no time. All one can do now is make the best of what would be, on his reckoning, a bad job. The presumption behind his aspiration was superfluous. I wonder, nevertheless, whether there is not more to it than that. One learns in the doing and, in this respect, it is by no means obvious that the art of government is so different from anything else. It cannot be learnt entirely or, even, principally *in vacuo*. Surely, the best way of teaching the African to govern is to engage him actively in the process of responsible government against a background of helpful and friendly advice. Certainly, he will make mistakes, but they will be made anyway. The choice is not between the production of faultless African administrations and the consignment of new countries to chaos. It lies, rather, between the production of a situation, which allows an African minister to correct his mistakes and learn from them, and one that rules out such a probability. The latter will be the case where African States are left suddenly to "go it alone" in the wake of a scuttling imperial power, which is being forced out because it clung to direct rule beyond its time.

There is a final point in this matter of the African's capacity

for government. One wonders what kind of standards are expected of him by those who tell him so insistently that he is not yet fit to govern himself. No one has ever said what they are. How, I wonder, would the British electorate and members of Parliament measure up to whatever they may be? It would be interesting to attempt a comparison in this regard.

One could question validly and sincerely the right of this country to retire from a dependent territory in the knowledge that there is going to be left behind a form of government liable to lead to popular absolutism or, as it is fashionably called to-day, one-party or guided democracy. Here again, however, one has to cut the argument short by pointing out the falsehood of the presumption on which the question rests. Britain is no longer free to choose whether or not she will confer the democratic process on the inhabitants of her African territories. Whatever the situation may have been twenty-five years ago, she has now no choice in the matter. She has to confer the franchise. The African expects it of her. He is determined to have the ballot box, not because he is enamoured of democracy, but because he looks upon it as the key to his independence. What happens to his freedom afterwards at the hands of his own rulers, does not concern him at all. Freedom for him is freedom from colonial rule. At this stage, he has neither the desire nor the inclination to envisage its significance in personal terms. Without a doubt, it would have been far better had Britain started years ago in Africa to build up a democracy from the "grass roots," based on the family and the village and working up through the tribe and the region to national level. She never did so. Instead, with great but well-meaning stupidity, she divorced Africa's political development from its economic base and presented her African subjects with a brand of democracy founded on the doctrine of popular sovereignty, which the late Harold Laski, in his latter-day foolishness, did so much to popularise in the 'thirties. Economically, Britain has done much for Africa. Politically, she has left her little, except a road that leads to neo-Jacobinism. The tragedy is that it is now too late to turn back. If the African is deprived of the vote at this stage, he will think it is done to deny him his freedom.

In Africa, the trend towards popular absolutism cannot now be reversed because the gift of the democratic process that con-



tains it cannot be withheld. Nevertheless, the pace of the trend can be lessened and the edge of eventual absolutism dulled by the rapid gift now of responsible government to dependent African territories. I am thinking that it would do the leader of an African people no harm at all to find himself, in the stage preceding the grant of independence, at the head of a government responsible to its people for the management of its affairs. Under such circumstances, much of his bitterness will be removed. He will benefit from a period during which, with the British serving him in a subordinate capacity, he is Prime Minister of a country that is free in everything but name. The process will mellow him. After some months of his government, opposition may well become respectable. Its point may come to be seen. At the same time, it will not become possible for him to harry or repress it, as would be the case were his country to enjoy complete independence. During the years of responsible government, he will have to stand up to the opposition and match it with his wits. After some years of this, he may feel less inclined, when independence comes, to smash it with his fist. All in all, a period of responsible government, as a prelude to independence, will prove most salutary for any African leader and his people. He will have to prove himself to them. They may discover that their idol has feet of clay. Nothing but good can come from such a proceeding. That is why Great Britain should proceed to the grant of responsible government without delay. It could be argued, indeed, that one reason for Ghana's rapid trend towards authoritarianism after independence is to be found in the fact that her Prime Minister was hardly out of gaol before he found himself the undisputed master of his country. Had Ghana been given earlier on a period of responsible government, the edge might well have been removed from what appears to some in the West as Dr. Nkrumah's somewhat exaggerated authoritarianism. By the same process of reasoning, it seems that the future of Nyasaland would be far more promising if Dr. Hastings Banda were its Prime Minister now instead of being locked up in a Rhodesian gaol. I regard the frustration attendant on his present discomfiture as the worst possible preparation for a moderate approach to the problems of responsible government. One can say that and remain, as this author is, totally out of sympathy with the outlook of those who are the driving force

in this country behind, say, the Movement for Colonial Freedom. At this stage of Africa's development, the approach of the sane man to her problems is pragmatic and factual, not doctrinaire.

Despite the mollifying effect of a spell of responsible government, I think there can be no doubt but that a large measure of popular absolutism, in the shape of one-party democracy and so on, will be the prevalent political form, after independence, in what are now Britain's dependent African territories. One can hope to remove a fair degree of arbitrariness from it by the methods sketched out above. One can do little more. The inclination in independent Africa will be towards popular absolutism. One can do little to hold it in permanent check by political means. Economically, however, it is a different story. In this context, we can turn to Ghana and note a development that critics of her authoritarian government have been far too slow to recognise. We refer to the efforts which Ghana has made in the field of community and co-operative development and the success that has attended them. At the same time that government, in that country, has been harrying the unfortunate opposition and tying the trade union movement to its apron strings, it has worked tremendously hard to stimulate vigorous self-help at village level. Its efforts, on the whole, have been very successful. Ghana's government has not imposed itself on the village economy. Rather has it encouraged the village to build up and develop its own vigorous economic life. The response has been enthusiastic. Here, in embryo, we have in Ghana what may prove to be the pattern for Africa's future. The picture is one of strong central government on a one-party basis combined with vigorous, independent life at village level; energetic growth at the grass roots, which will counter the trend towards absorption at the national political centre. Politics will not provide African national life with the stabiliser it is going to need after independence. That will be found in a vigorous social and economic life, based on self-help, at local and village level.

The outlook for British Africa is far brighter than appears at first sight. The proviso is that Britain should push ahead fast with the establishment of responsible government in her dependent territories. At the same time she should do her utmost to stimulate at local level the healthiest possible development of African village life.

# RICHARD ROLLE OF HAMPOLE

By

E. J. ARNOULD

THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY was the heyday of English mysticism and is also famous for its hermits and anchorites. Richard Rolle, whose life-span covers the first half of the century, has a marked place among both hermits and mystics.<sup>1</sup> Professor R. W. Chambers has observed that "in English or in Latin Rolle was, during the latter half of the fourteenth century and the whole of the fifteenth, probably the most widely read in England of all English writers." His works came to be regarded by later generations as standards of orthodoxy—a fact attested not only by the numerous copies that found their way into the libraries of many religious houses on the Continent as well as in England, but also by the spurious ascription to him of popular books of common doctrine (such as the *Pricke of Conscience*, of which over one hundred copies have survived to this day); and, above all, by tributes paid to him well into the times of the Counter-Reformation, when he was still acclaimed as *Strenuus ac divinus catholicae fidei athleta Ricardus*, the valiant and godly champion of the catholic faith.

That Richard Rolle died in the odour of sanctity is attested by a Latin *Office* written in anticipation of his beatification, complete with the miraculous cures worked on his tomb in the precincts of Hampole monastery in Yorkshire. This *Office* is our main source of information on Richard's life. It depicts for us a young man of fiery temperament, who, after a few years at

<sup>1</sup> The most convenient comprehensive account of the man, his times, and his works (in spite of a number of outdated passages) is still Miss Frances M. M. Comper's *The Life of Richard Rolle, together with an Edition of his Lyrics* (Dent, London, 1928).

The canon of Richard Rolle's works has been established by Miss Hope Emily Allen in *Writings ascribed to Richard Rolle of Hampole and Materials for his Biography* (P.M.L.A., New York, 1927).

Oxford and at home, one day resolutely turned away from what he called his sinful youth, ruthlessly cut himself off from his worldly environment and thenceforth strove, amidst difficulties and temptations, towards union with God in solitary contemplation.

Such a summary portrait is amply confirmed and completed by Rolle's own writings—providing these are read in full and without bias. These two conditions, unfortunately, have not always been fulfilled even by competent and sympathetic scholars. As a result, a very inaccurate picture of Rolle has, until recent times, been offered to us. He came to be described, on the one hand, as a Doctor of Theology and a student of the Sorbonne, even a priest, and, on the other, as a rebel against Church authorities and a declared enemy of some religious houses. Fortunately, these inaccuracies and distortions have now been rectified, thanks to the careful editing of Rolle's main works. He appears to us in a truer light, as a dedicated young man with a sound theological training, steeped in the reading of the Bible, bent on achieving the perfection of union with God and, not unnaturally, anxious to draw disciples to his own way of life both by his example and his writings. No evidence can be found for suggesting that Rolle ever swerved from his allegiance to the Church. Throughout his life his motto remained: *I bow in alle thynges till the lare of Halykirke*, "I submit in everything to the teaching of Holy Church." Nor did his charity exclude even his detractors: "I have loved those who despised me. I did not call perdition upon those who derided or slandered me. I have always loved those who opposed me and denounced me as worthy of contempt." His exultation over God's gifts to him emanated not from pride but from the gratitude of a candid mind, the true mark of humility: *Non sic lingua nostra appetat humilitatem ut veritatem relinquat*, "let not our tongue thirst for humility to the extent of forsaking the truth."

Rolle was a prolific writer, and his works are far from presenting a uniform pattern. If we omit the delightful *Canticum Amoris*, a youthful outpouring of his love for the Mother of God<sup>1</sup> and fragments of doubtful authenticity, they may be

<sup>1</sup> A. Wilmart, "Le Cantique d'Amour de Richard Rolle," *Revue d'Ascétique et de Mystique*, xxi (1940), pp. 143 sq.

The *Oxford Book of Medieval Latin Verse*, ed. by F. J. R. Raby (Clarendon Press (1959), p. 442).

classified into three groups, each of which corresponds to a particular stage or aspect of Rolle's spiritual career.

First we have the didactic writings, which belong to the traditional type of medieval devotional literature. They are nearly always commentaries of some Scriptural text or texts, and essentially compilations from previous authorities. Such are Rolle's Latin commentaries on the *Magnificat* or on *Psalm XX*, or on the first chapters of the *Apocalypse*, and two complete commentaries of the *Psalms*, one in Latin, one in English. These works, particularly the English Psalter (which is not, as has been asserted, a mere replica of Rolle's Latin Psalter), bear the stamp of our hermit's mind, and offer a good deal of corroborative evidence on his views and experiences.

Far more original and representative is a small group of treatises, which though they have the traditional ring, nevertheless contain many passages displaying the exclusive characteristics of his very personal style. The most important of these are the *Judica me Deus* (which takes its title from the 42nd Psalm), the *De Emendatione Vitae*, and the *Form of Living*.

The first part of the *Judica* reveals a youthful Rolle, the apprentice-hermit (*si heremita dicerer, cuius nomine indigne vocor*, "if I were called hermit, a name which I bear unworthily"), endeavouring to help a young priest-friend by compiling for him a manual of the chief duties of a parish priest, including a model sermon on the Last Judgment. The compilation is rather amateurish, and mainly derived from an almost contemporary Latin work known as *Pars Oculi* or *Oculus Sacerdotis*.

The *De Emendatione Vitae*<sup>1</sup> is of greater interest. Written for every Christian who aspires to a life of total dedication, it reflects Rolle's circumstances at this stage of his own spiritual progress. He describes his first steps in the way, from the contempt and renunciation of the world, through the practice of a regular and devout life and especially the meditation of Our Lord's Passion, up to the higher regions of love and contemplation. *Noli tardare*, "do not delay your conversion," begins Rolle. He describes conversion as "turning our minds towards Jesus and ceaselessly medi-

<sup>1</sup> The best edition of the *De Emendatione Vitae* is by Léopold Denis, S.J., *Du Péché à l'amour Divin ou l'Amendement du Pécheur*, Editions de la Vie Spirituelle, Paris, Desclée et Cie, 1926. There is also an English translation by Frances M. M. Comper, *The Fire of Love and Mending of Life* (Methuen, 1914).

tating on his counsels and commandments, with the resolve to follow and obey them." The obstacles (wealth, feminine charms, the grace and beauty of youth, that "threefold cord that is not easily broken") must be overcome through persistence. Contempt of worldly possessions is equally essential, for "attachment to worldly goods and the love of God are incompatible: the couch is so narrow that one of the bed-fellows must fall off." As a logical sequel, poverty becomes a necessary condition—poverty not only in fact, but in spirit, that is without regret, afterthought, or envy of others—humility of mind and heart.

Learn from me, says Jesus, for I am meek and humble in heart. He does not say: Learn from me because I am poor. Poverty is not a virtue in itself, it is misery. It is not worthy of praise in itself, but only a means of perfection: it helps us to gain Heaven and spares us many occasions of sin. . . .

When these first obstacles have been removed, it is necessary to devise a rule of life for oneself. One must first eliminate what pollutes the soul, sins of thought, speech, and deed; next, seek what purifies it, contrition, confession, satisfaction, fasting, prayer, almsgiving; thirdly, safeguard the soul's purity—purity of thought by constant meditation, control of the senses, honest occupation such as reading, pious conversation, writing or other useful work; purity of speech, by reflecting before speaking, by avoiding idle talk, and showing a horror of untruth; purity of deed by temperance, avoidance of corrupting company, and meditation on death; fourthly, one must try to make one's will conform to the will of God, mainly by seeing His image in His creatures, by trying to live in familiarity with Him through prayer and meditation, and by thinking of the happiness of heaven. This happiness can be partially enjoyed in contemplation.

In this state of spiritual well-being, however, new obstacles must be expected and overcome—the tribulations which tempt us to look back towards worldly comforts. The remedy for this is the virtue of patience sustained by the thought of the rewards that await perseverance, and of the alternative facing us: material happiness in this world and eternal suffering in the next, or patient suffering on this earth and eternal bliss thereafter. In this serenity and firmness of purpose the soul is free to labour towards its goal: union with God. Prayer is the essential and consistent activity, one enriched by the reading of the Scriptures, one that



grows easier by practice, until every action is itself a form of prayer. Its most important form is meditation—on the great mysteries of God's love, on the vanity of the world (a clear echo, this, of Pope Innocent III's classic work *De contemptu mundi*), and the mysteries of faith.

Finally, the soul reaches that "purity of heart that makes one see God and is accompanied by such joy and happiness that one feels these can never again be lost." Continuous enjoyment of this love is ensured by contemplation, the essential occupation of the soul dedicated to God. "The sweetness of contemplation is only acquired at the cost of immense efforts," but these efforts (later unnecessary, as Rolle himself emphasises in his later works) are soon munificently rewarded: "For, what is *grace*, if not the beginning of *glory*? And what is the perfection of *glory*, if not the consummation of *grace*, which holds in reserve for us a glorious eternity and an eternal *glory*?" Thus ends the *De Emendatione Vitae*.

The *Form of Perfect Living* is an adaptation of the *De Emendatione Vitae*. A classic of the Middle English devotional literature, it was written for a recluse named Margaret, probably the lady Margaret of whom the *Office* states that "Richard loved her with the perfect affection of Charity." Far from omitting the advice given to beginners in the *De Emendatione*, Rolle insists, here, too, on the main obstacles to conversion and the main snares of the Devil. He proclaims the greatness of the solitary life, but warns of its dangers (various temptations, excessive fondness of material ease, dreams and other illusions or delusions). He defines holiness: "Those alone are holy, whatever their status or position, who desire no earthly thing beyond their bare needs, who burn with the love of Jesus, and are bent on enjoying heavenly bliss." But he speaks at greater length than in the *De Emendatione* on the love of God, that same "insuperable, inseparable, singular" love, centred on the devotion to the Holy Name, one of Rolle's own favourite devotions in his youth. At some greater length, Rolle again defines this love: "a burning yearning for God, accompanied by a wonderful pleasure and sweetness, that makes us one with God." And, while clearly stating that "no man on earth can with certainty or without a special grace know whether he is in the state of perfect charity or not," Rolle enumerates seven signs by which one may feel confident of living in union with God.

Inevitably, the *Form of Perfect Living* ends with a chapter on the active and the contemplative modes of life, which is a concise summary of Rolle's views on the subject. Rolle is clearly biased in favour of the solitary life. We know that he was, at one time, engaged in a heated controversy on this question with partisans of the "regular" life in some order or community. But his views are well supported by authorities such as St. Bernard and St. Thomas Aquinas. He also distinguishes at least two grades in the contemplative life: one, the more common, is essentially a life of prayer and meditation, the other is the mystic stage more akin to rapture or even ecstasy. The latter, Rolle points out, is a "gratuitous gift," and the indescribable joy it affords finds its expression in "inexpressible praise of God"—a remark aptly illustrated by his later and larger works, the *Incendium Amoris*<sup>1</sup> and the *Melos Amoris*.<sup>2</sup> These two works are his masterpieces. They reflect Rolle's maturity in the contemplative life. Both are eminently personal.

The *Incendium Amoris* remains the more accessible. Since it contains a comprehensive account of Rolle's mystical career, apart from its final stages, a brief summary of its scope and contents will not be amiss:

The *Incendium Amoris* [writes Miss Deanesly] is a rambling biography, an explanation of "how Richard Hampole came to the Fire of Love". . . . The purpose of the book is described in the Prologue: "I have wondered more than I can tell," Rolle says, "when first I felt my heart grow warm and glow with no imaginary but with a real and, as it were, sensible flame. For I had not reckoned that such a warmth could happen to any man in this exile. . . . Therefore I offer this book to the sight, not of philosophers and wise men of this world, nor of great theologians wrapped in endless questionings, but of the simple and untaught, those who seek to love God rather than to know many things. For not by disputing, but by doing, is He known, and by loving. . . . Wherefore, because here I incite all to love, and I shall seek to explain the burning and supernatural feeling of love, let this book be allotted the title of Fire of Love."

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Margaret Deanesly, *The Incendium Amoris of Richard Rolle of Hampole* (Manchester U.P., 1915). French annotated edition: Dom N. Noetinger, *Le Feu de l'Amour, le Modèle de la Vie Parfaite, le Pater, par Richard Rolle de Hampole* (Tours, 1928).

<sup>2</sup> E. J. Arnould, *The Melos Amoris of Richard Rolle of Hampole* (Blackwell, Oxford, 1957).



The book itself takes forty-two chapters to accomplish this end. In the Prologue, Rolle states his own desire to prove to others the joy of the life he has himself chosen. The next eleven chapters are devoted to considerations preliminary to the understanding of such a life; then come two chapters [XII and XV] where he passes from advice to autobiography and which contain most of the passages quoted in the *Office*. The remaining chapters are mainly a series of discourses strung together with no particular plan, on the various difficulties of the contemplative life, interspersed with prayers and meditations which are the Latin counterpart of Rolle's better known Middle English work. . . . The main idea of the book is simply: that the solitary finds Him whom he loves with a rapture and completeness no other life can afford. . . .

The *Melos Amoris* (wrongly called *Melum Contemplativorum* by Horstman and others after him) has been edited from all extant manuscripts: these are only ten in number, and, when we compare it with the ninety or so manuscripts of the *Incendium Amoris*, this number is significant. For the *Melos* is written in a curious kind of medieval Latin which accounts not only for the small number of manuscripts extant, but for the long-felt want of a complete printed text, as also for the absence of a translation. It is indeed doubtful whether such an extraordinary book can ever be satisfactorily translated. Certainly, no translation could hope to render the unique effect of the most lyrical and most alliterative Latin prose ever written. This style, highly artificial in appearance, yet quite spontaneous, has a charm of its own and is an instrument perfectly attuned for the expression of mystical experiences.

The *Melos* takes up where the *Incendium* left off: it carries us one stage further, and the emphasis is now on the climax of Rolle's mysticism: the melody. Having reached full enjoyment of union with God, Rolle is now less inclined to refer to the past or to preach a message. Although he still describes his endeavours, and the favours he has received, in order to encourage others, he is mostly concerned with the expression of joy and gratitude. Whatever the precise chronology of Rolle's works, there is no doubt that his *Melos Amoris* marks the climax in the spiritual elevation of the hermit. The apotheosis of Love which he describes there is, to him, a foretaste of the joys of heaven.

The last few pages of the book, on "the glory of the saints" as promulgated at the Last Judgment, are the fitting culmination

of the many chapters he has devoted to "the perfection of the saints," as exemplified in his own spiritual pilgrimage. His conclusion is a farewell: "I now proceed towards a happy end—for I have nearly completed my arduous progress—in order that, trampling corruption under foot, I may find consummation in song." Either Rolle foresees the end of his earthly pilgrimage, or, more probably, having achieved the aim he had set himself, he now prepares to enjoy this highest gift, the *melos*, to the full.

From all these works of Rolle there emerges a fairly clear picture of his activities, of his experiences, and even of his temperament. For none of them, however traditional in character, is totally devoid of some autobiographical element. One gets the impression of a man with a sound university training—witness his expert handling of the Latin language both in verse and prose—particularly familiar with the Old and New Testaments, but bent on his own purpose (*singulare propositum*) and, in spite of his dependence on the traditional and Patristic literature, largely independent in the elaboration of his views on spiritual matters. This independence, however, entails no breach either of orthodoxy or charity. And it must be noted that on the few points of dogma to which he has occasion to refer, such as the question of predestination, the authority of the Scriptures, or the infallibility of the Church, his orthodoxy is unimpeachable. Again, when describing his own mystical experiences, he acknowledges these not as rewards for his endeavours, but as free gifts from God's bounty: nor does he claim credit for them, except, perhaps, in so far as he has striven to prepare for them. Even so, he does not present them as purely arbitrary privileges. It follows that his own case is not presented merely as an object of wonder and envy, but as an example containing a practical lesson even for beginners in the way of spiritual perfection.

Rolle's spiritual pilgrimage began with his "conversion." The *Office* gives a lively and somewhat melodramatic picture of a young man, freshly returned from Oxford, running away from home and friends, making for himself a crude hermit's outfit with one of his sister's dresses; and, a little later, boldly standing up in church, marching up to the pulpit—admittedly with the approval of the parish priest—and delivering an extempore sermon which those present declared to be the finest they had ever heard. Whatever the facts behind these highly-coloured

scenes, Richard clearly came to a sudden resolve to flee the world of his youth and to devote his life to the pursuit of perfection. His first endeavours on that path show nothing exceptional. He meditates on the Passion of our Lord, one of the mysteries of divine love that had particularly struck him and contributed to his conversion. Then he turns to the worship of the name of Jesus, and, at the same time, his devotion to the holy Mother of God provides an outlet for the highly sensitive soul of the young hermit: a beautiful expression of this devotion is found in Rolle's *Canticum Amoris*.<sup>1</sup> He remained faithful to these devotions of his youth, but allusions to them are naturally less common in his later works, since they were eclipsed by the great mystical gifts on which the later works concentrate.

The young man's progress was not, however, without difficulties. Some of these were due largely to his impulsive, intransigent, and even eccentric temperament. He clashed with some of his patrons, like John Dalton, a friend of his father; he objected to interference from former gay companions; he had to face temptations of a sentimental, if not sensual, nature; loneliness sometimes seemed to him hardly bearable; and he suffered from temporary frustration in his yearning for perfect quiet, and in his desire to preach the ways of salvation to others. Hence his wanderings, "like Cain in flight after his crime," in search of the ideal hermitage; wanderings that were denounced by unfriendly tongues as a sign of restlessness—although Richard Rolle was certainly never the type of "Robert renne-abouté" pilloried by *Piers Plowman*. At last, he was able to settle down, probably in the vicinity of Hampole nunnery. In the solitude ultimately found, he continued to read and meditate, mostly the Sacred Books. Among these he recommends the Prophets, the Gospels and the canonical Epistles, and he quotes freely from the *Apocalypse*. But his favourite seems to have been *The Song of Songs*. It is from this that he borrowed the phrase which recurs as a leit-motiv in most of his works: "Amore langueo." Characteristic of this time of reading and meditation are his "postils" or brief commentaries. He described himself as "*probatus postillator*, experienced writer of postils." Reading and meditation were his preparation for contemplation—*labor, sed dulcis*,

<sup>1</sup> A. Wilmart, "Le Cantique d'Amour de Richard Rolle," *Revue d'Ascétique et de Mystique*, xxi (1940), pp. 143 sq.

*desiderabilis et suavis . . . bonus labor*. As usual Rolle speaks from experience, and it is from experience also that he describes the joy that rewards earlier efforts. It was surely in order to alleviate these efforts, and to ensure greater freedom from material conditions, that he came to adopt the sitting position at prayer, and insisted on this apparently trifling detail with a curious obstinacy in his English as well as his Latin works.

Gradually, almost imperceptibly, one can watch him pass from these early stages to higher spheres. Eventually the "door of heaven" opens before him, and he begins to be prepared for what would now be called the transforming union. He repeatedly describes these experiences, which are summed up in the three words: "*dulcor, calor, canor*" (later *melos*). Of these, only the last two are mystical gifts in the strict sense. "Sweetness" was felt by him as soon as the difficulties previously encountered had been overcome: it no doubt represents the sensation of relief and moral well-being normally experienced by a soul freshly detached from worldly bonds.

As for the "heat"—a phenomenon curiously parallel with Blaise Pascal's famous ecstasy—Rolle has given us an account of it with unusual precision, in the *Incendium Amoris*:

Eventually I made great progress in spiritual joy. From the beginning of my change of life and the transformation of my soul, three years, less three or four months, elapsed until the heavenly door opened before me, when the eye of my heart was able to behold the denizens of heaven and to discover the way to my Beloved and how I could go on sighing for Him. Since then, the heavenly door remaining open, barely one year passed until the time when I felt the heat of eternal love within my heart: I was sitting in a chapel and, enjoying the sweetness of prayer and meditation, I suddenly felt in myself an unusual and pleasant warmth. At first I wondered where this came from, but after a prolonged experience of it, I realised that it emanated not from a creature but from the Creator, for it became ever more ardent and more pleasant. This material and inexpressibly sweet warmth remained with me nine months and a few weeks, until the time when I received from above the gift of hearing the celestial melody. . . .

There is, however, a noticeable difference in his description of his experiences in the *Melos Amoris*. In the *Incendium Amoris*, Rolle says that the fire was succeeded by the "gift of hearing the

celestial song." He is speaking here merely of "internal, or spiritual song" as opposed to the external and material, having been rebuked, so he tells us, for not taking part in public singing in church and having replied to this accusation at length. In the *Melos Amoris* the song becomes "melody," the main theme of the book, Rolle's last work. He describes it as the highest grade in the love of God; it drives away care, grief, and fear; spiritual joy turns to rapture when this supra-material harmony is heard. But only the soul in close union with the Beloved, and especially the solitary, can enjoy it fully. For the *melos* is incompatible not only with earthly songs, even those of the liturgy, but also with worldly contact of any kind. It is a foretaste of heavenly joys and, as such, defies accurate description.

Although these three gifts, *dulcor*, *calor*, *canor* (or *melos*), are the special reward of solitaries and contemplatives, they can be experienced by anybody, in any milieu. Even the *melos* can be enjoyed in the midst of various occupations, as was the case with Rolle. But one cannot expect to receive them as of right; and, admirable and desirable as they are, these exceptional gifts are not the sole or necessary signs of mystical union. What is more, they do not constitute the essence of perfection; and Rolle never refrains from giving more commonplace advice to beginners. He insists on remote preparation, on purity of mind and body, and on the other Christian virtues, humility, patience, self-denial—all necessary preliminaries before love can reign in the soul and transform it.

This way of preparation, too, is exemplified by Rolle's personal experience. And once he has reached the summit, he finds himself in a state of steadfastness, serenity, and confidence, which, in its highly lyrical expression, might easily, especially when taken out of context, be mistaken for overweening pride: God himself has been his teacher, and to God he appeals against all contradictors. Nothing will ever deprive him of the joy he derives from his permanent union with the Beloved or of his conviction that his salvation is assured. Such confidence is, of course, the logical result of his profound conviction and his trust in God. It gives expression to feelings that cannot accurately be described, still less adequately explained. Intransigence is here a form of refusal to compromise with error or sin. Exhilaration in the description of God's gifts is a form of tribute to God's



munificence. But Rolle's intransigence and his accents of triumph never degenerate into rebellion or vainglory. Indeed, in contrast to the eccentricities of his "conversion" as related in the *Office*, and despite the fierce tone he occasionally adopts in discussion, despite also the extravagance of his style, Rolle was never inclined to excess or violence. Just as his submission to the Church on any point of official doctrine was absolute at all times, so his attitude in practical matters of asceticism was always governed by common sense and reason. This may well explain his peculiar insistence on the advantages of the sitting position during prolonged contemplation. It also explains how he had occasion to refute malicious accusations of mixing with sinners (an accusation which, as he rightly pointed out, had been levelled at Jesus by the Pharisees) or of not practising severe fasting and maceration (to which he replied that mortification of the flesh should not be carried to the point of rendering mind and body unfit for prayer and meditation).

Again, no extraordinary supra-natural phenomenon marked Rolle's mysticism. He himself never claimed any special power over natural forces, even though the *Office* tells us that, through contact with him, Margaret, a recluse and his disciple, recovered her lost speech and her health. On the whole, Rolle remains profoundly human and, apart from the frequent lyrical outbursts found in his works, every one of these works contains useful advice. Unlike, for instance, Walter Hilton or the anonymous author of the *Cloud of Unknowing*, Rolle does not set out to teach. With the exception of the short works addressed to individuals—probably, in such cases, on request—he does not write treatises of the usual kind. Rather than a teacher, Rolle is a witness. His example, as he had hoped, presents a concrete case of man's elevation, through the normal stages of purgation and illumination, to constant union with God, and of the joy resulting from this intimate union. St. Teresa defined mysticism as "that which no skill or effort of ours, however much we labour, can attain to, though we should prepare ourselves for it, and that preparation must be of great service." This definition applies to Rolle perfectly and would have won his approval. Even the beginner can derive much benefit from following the holy hermit on his pilgrimage. To all, at one stage or another, Rolle is a guide as well as an example.

It is true that the average reader may sometimes find Rolle's style abstract or even abstruse. It is true also that a fair knowledge of Latin is required for a full appreciation of the verbal fireworks in the *Melos Amoris*, since, as we have already observed, a translation could hardly be more than a necessary evil. But Rolle's style is always appropriate to his mood of the moment; and, in several works of his, Latin or English, especially the latter, the thought is conveyed with great simplicity and clarity, while bearing always the personal mark of its author. The quality of Rolle's English writings can be judged from the fact that Rolle was selected by Professor R. W. Chambers as a master link in the continuous development from the Old English of King Alfred to the Elizabethan English prose of St. Thomas More and his school. Richard Rolle's style, like his message, has lost nothing of its freshness or its vigour. Both have won for him a permanent place of honour in the pageant of great English religious writers.

## THE STANE STREET

By

ELIZABETH BELLOC

THE HAPPIEST CHILDREN are those who are brought up in the country and whose earliest memories are filled with the sense of beauty and space. Later on it is easy for them to accept the mysterious idea of Infinity, and to know that the beautiful earth, at her best, is only a short step down from Heaven. One such early memory is of Gumber Corner, the local name for the point on the Sussex Downs where the Stane Street, the ancient Roman road from Chichester to London, crosses the high and lonely down above Bignor. Too young to know the Roman road, we only knew the great spaces of grey-green turf rolling away on every side into the illimitable distances of the sky. It was far from any human dwelling, a skyey wilderness, well-known to belong to the fairies, whose magical thorn-trees

grew there. The turf was thick with patches of wild thyme, and the air laden with its scent. There was purple knapweed, with stalks too tough to pick, scarlet poppies and pale mauve scabious, delicate harebells with filigree stalks and tendrils. There were two kinds of thistles, tall and purple-crowned, or flat and prickly, growing down in the short grass. The thistles meant business, and you had to look out.

It was many years later that the Roman road became a reality and the quest of the Stane Street a delight as memorable as the childhood games at Gumber. The Second World War destroyed so much, but it could not destroy the fascinating, enigmatic, half-hidden roadway which the ancient Romans drove in a series of arrow-straight alignments the fifty-six miles from Chichester to London Bridge. The Roman name for Chichester was *Regnum*, their chess-board town of rectangular streets built on the Sea Plain, a little way inland from the many creeks and landing-places of the large inlet of the sea now called Chichester Harbour. The actual date of the making of the road is unknown. There is no mention of it in the account of Agricola's work in Britain, *circa* A.D. 85. And, strangely, none in the Antonine Itinerary, in the time of Hadrian. One conjectural date is A.D. 70, but another authority reminds us that the general use of the harbours of *Regnum* was a late development in Roman Britain. It is possible that such a remarkable feat of engineering was more likely to be sponsored during or after the energetic government of Agricola than at any other time. But the absence of any written reference in Roman times leaves a blank.

There are important clues in the dates of Roman pottery and coins found in the halting-places along its route: at Halnaker, coins of Nero, A.D. 54 to 68; at Hardham, pottery dating from A.D. 50 to 100; at Pulborough, Samian ware from the time of Claudius, A.D. 43. But Pulborough is a very ancient place of human dwelling, and the pre-historic crossing of the Arun was there.

It seems that this Roman road was almost entirely military in use and character. It did not link up any important centres of population, nor was it used for commerce. Its line was completely artificial, taking the straightest possible way across wild country, and not following any pre-historic track, as so many Roman roads did, for at any rate, part of their way. The Stane



Street is a Saxon name and means the Stone Road. It is first mentioned in a document as late as 1270, where it is called "Stanstret."

Certain sections of the Stane Street are still in vigorous use as a modern road. At its beginning, from the Eastgate of Chichester, it carries the twentieth-century traffic for four miles north-east across the flat Sea Plain to the foot of Halnaker Hill. This romantic hill, crowned with its red seventeenth-century wind-mill, much carven with the names of village lovers, is the first green swell of the South Downs rising from the plain. The modern road to Petworth goes round to the right, but the Roman track obediently mounts the slope in a straight line and crosses the shoulder below the mill, its continuous green mound or "agger" haunted by long-legged hares, and thick with cow-slips in the spring. On the northern slope it descends to coincide once more with the modern road for a brief quarter mile, but its last short lap on the north of the hill, through a cornfield, has been obliterated, alas, by the plough in recent years. The old farm at this point, for long generations, has always been called "Sea Beach," a strange name for a farm lying seven miles inland. But it was named after the sea-pebbles and shingle which the Romans brought from the coast at Selsey in waggon-loads for the construction of their road, and which the ploughs of successive generations have turned over in the fields. The name of this farm is an impressive reminder of the importance of place-names as a clue to historical knowledge.

From Sea Beach Farm the ancient track takes to the real wilderness, climbing up and away over Long Down, its stony bank marked by a line of magnificent beech-trees. As the track comes down into Eartham Wood, in April it is clear to see that the thousands of primroses have quite misunderstood the original purpose of the "agger." They evidently think that it was constructed solely in their interest, and it is impossible to know where to put one's foot.

After Eartham the Roman road, a broad high mound, still strongly apparent, leads on into the depths of the Nore Wood. The occasional big beech-trees, the dark yews, the innumerable saplings, the thick undergrowth of hazel, all close round the solitary traveller as they once closed round the marching legions long ago: because it is thought that this forest is very old. The

high and lonely country round it is called No Man's Land, the haunt of the fairies. Great numbers of its huge beeches were felled during the war effort in 1918, but for decades since then the Nore Wood has returned to the immemorial peace which enfolded it before the coming and after the passing of Rome.

The track climbs steadily uphill, and from the wood the traveller emerges on to the open Downs at Gumber, on the shoulder beside Bignor Hill, more than seven hundred feet above the world. Looking back, south-westward, the Stane Street points, straight as an arrow at Chichester cathedral spire, eight miles away on the shadowy Sea Plain. Northward, over the rim of the enchanted Down, is the blue Weald, stretching away to the shadowy outline of Leith Hill dominating the North Downs, nearly twenty miles away. It is thought that the Roman engineers first plotted their road on this aerial thyme-scented height by Bignor Hill.

From Gumber the road turns east and makes a gradual descent of the face of the Down, the "agger" bravely apparent, with the deep ditch or "vallum" on either side. It vanishes down into Bignor Tail Wood, where, flattened and lost, it disappears completely among the crowding tree-trunks, the beech-mast, and the emerald carpet of Solomon's Glory. You come down into the flat fields below the wood and look back at the great wall of the Downs standing steeply above you. But northward there is no sign of the magical road. True to its ghostly character, it has vanished.

A field to the west of this point was known for centuries as the Town Field, or the Old Bury. Though these queer names had persisted for unnumbered generations, they remained without explanation until a dramatic day in 1811, when a ploughman uncovered a series of mosaic pavements, part of what remained of a magnificent Roman villa, thought to have been built before A.D. 100. It must have had its own approach from the Stane Street, like a modern drive. It had an immense courtyard with a pillared colonnade, rooms for summer and winter, and an excellent heating system. Among the mosaics is a fine head of Venus, and a row of Cupids playing at being gladiators. There were once mosaics of the Four Seasons, but only Winter has remained, an emphatic comment on the hypocaust. This mosaic

is an impressive work of art, expressing what our climate must have meant to those exiled southerners of the earlier Roman occupation, homesick for their sunny vineyards on the other side of the Alps. It shows a man's head and shoulders clad in the hooded Gallic cloak, well-known to the Romans and much used in Britain, and here a glacial blue in colour. The face has a bleak and mournful dignity, and the man is holding a stark black leafless bough: the very spirit of winter in this land.

One day between the two wars some old farm workers at Bignor told an enquirer, in their slow Sussex speech, that they "had always heard that the men who made the Road had used *baskets* for their work." This sounded unlikely. But quite recent research has established the existence of big wicker baskets with which the Romans transferred the stones from their waggons to the track. This is a really wonderful example of how an accurate truth can reach us by a legend, the spoken word echoing clearly down the long corridors of time.

At Bignor you leave the high hard chalk land and the clear apparent track. For the four miles on to Pulborough the road plays hide-and-seek in the marshy land of the Arun Valley. North of Bignor Tail Wood is Grevatt's Wood, an oak copse growing on a northward-facing slope of clay soil. Here the Stane Street reappears briefly just as it enters the wood. The conjectural track descends the wooded slope laterally, and you descend with it, wading deep through bluebells and white garlic flowers. But you are soon wading deep in plain mud and water too. It is the wettest wood in the world, and the Stane Street has helped to make it so, its stony bank, now sunken into the ground, having dammed up the seeping rills from a spring higher up. The Romans turned this to account, and in our day the traces of a brick-built Roman water trough were discovered in the middle of the wood, immediately on the south side of the unseen track. The road appears faintly and briefly as it leaves the wood, to reappear dramatically a mile further on in a cutting through the high sandy soil of a hill called Ashurst Common. The hill is dug over from east to west with three big sand-pits, and thickly grown with pine trees. It is an enchanted spot when the pines are sighing in the spring wind, their boughs casting a shifting pattern of light and shade over the hill. The central pit has a deep sand-walled entrance from the south. This, paved with timber sleepers and still in use,

is the actual Roman road, and is in a dead straight line with the faint track, leaving Grevatt's Wood a mile away. This cutting reappears on the north side of the sandy hill and descends to disappear completely into the marshy land before Hardham Camp.

Hardham Camp is all that remains of the Mansio, or regular halting-place of the Roman legions, just thirteen miles from Chichester. The camp is about four acres square, built on a hard ledge of ground amid the soft wet earth of the Arun marshes, a mile south-west of Pulborough. Its traces are faint, and the railway, alas, has destroyed the western wall. From there to the Roman crossing of the Arun, just where the modern bridge now stands, the ancient road has sunk into the marsh. But an efficient modern causeway, a little to the east of the conjectural Stane Street, now carries the traffic to the bridge above the wild beautiful seas of flood-water which inundate the Arun Valley in winter.

A bridge was built at Pulborough, at the traditional river crossing, in 1829, and the workmen found the metalling of the Roman road deep down in the ground immediately before the bridge site. From the bridge, if you look eastward across the marshes along the line of the Downs, you see the lovely blue outline of Chanctonbury Ring on the horizon. In Roman times there was a temple of Mercury crowning the then treeless hill of Chanctonbury. It is thought to have stood there, in use, for three hundred years; and as a ruin, for long centuries after. Young Charles Goring, from Wiston House at the foot of the hill, planted the famous Ring in the eighteenth century: and he actually started his beechwood among the Roman bricks still scattered there. No marble was ever found up there, and the little temple may have been ugly enough, like the square-built brick temple of Janus, intact to this day at Autin in central France. We are indebted to the perfect taste of the eighteenth century for the romantic beechwood which now crowns the 800-foot hill, and which Charles Goring happily lived long enough to see.

From Pulborough bridge the Stane Street comes back into modern use again, and carries the traffic of our time over the clay soil and through the oakwoods of the Weald, the ten miles to the second Mansio at Alfoldean. Here the traces of the Camp

are in better condition than those at Hardham because it is a more deserted district, with less temptation through the centuries to take the Roman stones away for building purposes. Immediately north of the Mansio is the second crossing of the Arun, here only a brook. And, incredible to tell, the actual supports of the Roman bridge, beams of water-hardened wood, were actually found still *in situ* in the bed of the stream during the severe drought of 1934. These amazing relics are now in Brighton Museum.

A little north of Alfoldean (lovely name!) the Stane Street makes a T with the modern road from Horsham to Guildford. This spot has always been called Roman Gate; and a little to the east you find the "agger" again leading uphill through a thick copse called Roman Wood. You make your way through the hazel thickets and over the clayey soil to the village of Rowhook.

This is enchanted country. A little to the east, out of sight, is Field Place, the sixteenth-century manor-house where Shelley was born; and Warnham Pond where he first sailed his paper boats. Hereabouts the powers of nature are strong, and from Rowhook the Stane Street quite definitely takes you into fairyland. There are people who do not believe in fairyland, but I think they are mistaken. This part of the Weald has always been deserted by human kind. There are no villages and the farms are few. As the ancient track leads you on into the deep fields and woods, a mysterious silence falls, broken only by the sighing of the wind and the song of the birds. In May the grass grows high in the fields, beautiful with yellow buttercups and pale purple lady's slipper. The atmosphere distils a peculiar sweetness, characteristic of the Weald, and well-known to those who love it. And there is a powerful drive and determination about the Roman road, its very soul and character surviving the centuries, which leads the traveller on, half-frightened, half-delighted, into the solitude of this fairy-haunted land.

The practical Romans probably found this magical interlude a bore. To them the enchanted woodland was that muddy and near-impassable forest of Anderida, a stifling land of thickets where there was no village to halt at, and nowhere to get a drink. And in this section of the road there are, and were, three deepish ghylls or ravines, each with its stream, and difficult enough to negotiate with the clumsy two-wheeled chariots of Rome. After

the four-mile passage of the woods they must have been glad to emerge into the more open country where to-day their road is a flourishing modern highway leading to the village of Ockley. Here, in the ninth century one of the Christian leaders, King Ethelwulf, fought and defeated the Danes. The modern road coincides with the Stane Street for another mile and a half as far as Buckinghill Farm.

Here, as at Halnaker, the modern road turns east, while the Roman track attacks the hill in an undeviating straight line. This is the first swell of the North Downs rising from the plain, with much-cultivated fields, so that the road appears in faint traces only. Here a ploughman told me that they always know when the plough turns up part of the half-obliterated Roman track, because its stones are the pebbles of the sea-shore. The full apparent track reappears on the five hundred-foot high shoulder of the hill, to run past Anstie Grange Farm into the baffling thickets of Redlands and the Great Wood. You find it on the other side of impassable thickets, a damp and rush-grown track, its whole neighbourhood so misted over with bluebells that you wonder why the place was ever called Redlands. But you are now well into Surrey, and you must be careful, because there are stockbrokers in the wood. Pekinese dogs yap at you from sham-Tudor villas hidden in the trees, and any path may lead you unexpectedly on to someone's tennis court. The track leads you on till it coincides with the modern road traversing the deep Roman cutting through the sandstone at the entrance to Dorking. Then it vanishes, and with it, utterly, the *Mansio* which must have been the origin of Dorking.

The track reappears briefly, running lugubriously through Dorking churchyard, but there is now no sign of it at Burford Bridge, north of Dorking, the traditional Roman crossing of the river Mole. Well within living memory it was seen here, but it has now disappeared before the calamitous urban development of this once-lovely place, under the precipitous wooded escarpment of Box Hill. Further north, more secluded and beautiful, is Juniper Hill, and, strangely enough, as beauty comes back, the Stane Street comes back too, appearing on the lawn under the great cedars at Juniper Hall, the eighteenth-century "Gothick" mansion which sheltered a group of distinguished French emigrés during the French Revolution. Here also came Madame de Stael



and talked her fellow-guests into a stupor until her father insisted on her return to France.

The Stane Street, with "agger" once more apparent, takes the very steep slope of Juniper Hill on a curve, climbing the four hundred feet to the top of Mickleham Down. Up there in the sweet air, among the harebells again, it manages to get lost, to reappear so dramatically that you feel it must have done it for fun. It leads you on into the woods north of Mickleham under its local name of Pebble Lane. After the bewildering intervals around Dorking it is good to feel the Roman stones again under your feet. It takes you straight back into its own haunted solitude, its own atmosphere of immemorial peace. It goes through a wood of yews, dark and solemn as a mortuary chapel; then downhill, crossing a modern road and skirting a cheerful golf course, its strong individual spirit untouched by these sharply differing atmospheres. It climbs again slowly, going through a land strangely silent and peaceful for over-built Surrey, with corn-fields on the right and pastures on the left and blue distances ahead, till it reaches Tyrell's Wood, over four hundred feet high, from where, on a clear day, the traveller can see the spires of London seventeen miles away. From here, alas, it is not far to Thirty Acres Barn, a big Edwardian stable for Epsom standing in a hollow. Here the mysterious and beloved road disappears again, but this time forever.

It is known to have gone by Merton and on by Clapham; by Newington where there were tombs on either side of it, as along the Appian Way, outside Rome. On, through the jumble of modern buildings, the line is carried through to that London Bridge which the Romans built perhaps fifty yards to the east of the present bridge. There, like a human soul which crosses the dark river into the Unknown, the noble Roman road finishes its course.

# THE REIGN OF ELIZABETH

*Professor Black's History*

By

FRANCIS EDWARDS

**T**IME'S GLORY has not yet calmed all the contending kings, fully unmasked falsehood, nor completely brought truth to light as far as the reign of the first Elizabeth is concerned. Nevertheless Professor Black's new edition of his celebrated volume in the Oxford History of England<sup>1</sup> constitutes a most useful summary of contemporary knowledge of the subject. The publisher's blurb does not grossly overstate in describing this as "in some respects at least a new book." There are many significant additions and alterations in this second edition tending to greater accuracy than appeared in the first.

A reign which saw the emergence of a new ecclesiastical system is bound to be controvertible at many points: far more than can be dealt with adequately in so short an article. But it is not only in connection with matters purely ecclesiastical that doubts arise. Reading between the lines of Professor Black's book, it becomes evident that a vast amount of research still needs to be done on the various plots engineered in the reign of Elizabeth—and for that matter the early years of her successor. These plots were hatched at fairly regular intervals not merely until the end of Elizabeth's reign but until the end of the Cecils' rule in 1612. Odd features about all of them, from the Ridolfi Plot to the Gunpowder Plot, are that the chance of success was always very slight; the likelihood of discovery overwhelming. The dramatis personæ always seemed to include personal enemies of the Cecils and/or persons of very doubtful antecedents whose adherence to the Catholic, or any other cause, seemed doubtful at almost any time before they decided to risk their lives in an enterprise. What the religious cause could gain from such things, even had they succeeded in doing away with the monarch, was always very

<sup>1</sup>*The Reign of Elizabeth, 1558-1603*, by J. B. Black (Oxford University Press, 35s).



dubious—and the Catholics themselves were aware of it. What the government gained from their discovery—always just in time—was enormous in so far as they helped to discredit the cause; and made it possible to sweep away rivals and other undesirables on the crest of a wave of public indignation.

We notice most of this in the Ridolfi Plot. As the Professor admits,<sup>1</sup> "the duke was a coward." His cowardice, or extreme caution if you will, was displayed when it came to taking part in the Northern Rebellion. Instead of raising the standard of revolt after leaving the court in September 1569, the duke remained at Kenninghall. Finally, "fearing the queen's resentment, and believing that his imprisonment was imminent, he craved the royal pardon in a letter of 24 September, and wrote to his fellow-conspirators to dissuade them from action."<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, the duke, who was so cautious when boldness might have won the day, was recklessness itself in an enterprise organised, as it seems, quite impracticably, by the Italian financier Ridolfi. The duke had sailed close to the wind, had repented, and been pardoned. Why should he have exposed himself gratuitously once again to disgrace and worse? Moreover Norfolk and Arundel, it seems, had planned to oust Cecil from power earlier in the same year; a plan betrayed by Leicester. Cecil might have overlooked this half-hearted affair had it not been succeeded by a plan for Norfolk to marry Mary Queen of Scots.<sup>3</sup> Cecil, as Professor Black remarks, might well be doubtful: doubtful in fact of a scheme which could put the duke so dangerously beyond his own control. In any case it was a secret of the Cecils' power that they were good neither at forgiving nor forgetting. Is it likely that Norfolk who cavilled at Cecil the parvenu would be content to make himself the runabout of an erratic Italian merchant? And in so doubtful a cause?

On page 150 we read, "... about 10 March he gave *by word of mouth* his assent to do what he could for the Queen of Scots and the advancement of the Catholic religion."<sup>4</sup> By word of whose mouth was he reported; and how reliably? Spain and France had already demonstrated very clearly their reluctance, indeed inability, to intervene by force of arms to help the Catholic cause at this stage. Could the success of so wild a scheme be left to depend on so uncertain a factor as French or Spanish inter-

<sup>1</sup> p. 137.<sup>2</sup> p. 137.<sup>3</sup> p. 133.<sup>4</sup> p. 150.

vention? On the other hand Cecil was only too well served by such a rumour. For France, apprehensive of the revelation of Spanish intentions on England, would naturally draw closer to Elizabeth. Thus England's dangerous diplomatic isolation would be at an end. Well might the intelligent Alva be sceptical. Failure would not only be a blow to the Catholic cause, it would bring Mary Queen of Scots at least one perilous step nearer the block. Cecil the statesman, under no illusions as to the dangers of having two queens in so small a hive, doubtless felt easier at the thought.

Ridolfi, the *gran parlaquina*, makes the round of the European capitals blandly announcing to all and sundry, and hardly bothering to talk in a whisper, the details of the forthcoming plot. Not surprisingly, word of it all gets back to Cecil and the court from Tuscany, Navarre, and elsewhere. In May Charles Bailly is arrested at Dover, most conveniently carrying Ridolfi's correspondence to the Bishop of Ross. So in the fullness of time all is discovered. Norfolk, Arundel, Southampton, Cobham, and others—the dangerous old nobility, the potential bulwark of Catholicism, and the enemies of Cecil are all implicated together. Norfolk was executed in June. "Thus perished the greatest in England—the last aristocratic champion of reaction—a victim to his own inordinate ambition and crooked ways."<sup>1</sup> Elizabeth from this time was irreconcilably anti-Catholic. There was evidence of this in her attitude to Anjou's perseverance in his religious beliefs during the marriage negotiations.

But this is not all the story. One must add at least one other fact. Ridolfi was imprisoned in 1569 for having taking a hand "in the intrigues of 1569." He was released, however, on paying a bond of £1,000, undertaking not "to deal directly or indirectly in any matters appertaining to Her Majesty or the state of this realm otherwise than he shall be licensed by Her Majesty, or have her assent by declaration of some of her Privy Council. Neither shall he impart to any person the matters whereof he hath been examined since his restraint."<sup>2</sup>

He was released by an order from Cecil of 26 January 1570, his bond being restored to him.<sup>3</sup>

The question arises, did Ridolfi keep his word or break it in the years that preceded Norfolk's execution?

The tenth chapter takes the conventional view of the Queen

<sup>1</sup> p. 152. <sup>2</sup> P.R.O.: S.P. 12: Vol. 59: f. 102: Date—II.XI.1569. <sup>3</sup> *Ibid*: Vol. 66.

of Scots, presenting a résumé of what has so far been put forward on the government side. "She was a credulous and impulsive conspirator full of exaggerated optimism, unburdened by a conscience, but void of a sense of reality, which is the basis of success in plotting as in all other things."<sup>1</sup> Moreover, "when brought to book—for sometimes her correspondence miscarried into Walsingham's hands—she lied volubly but unconvincingly." Undoubtedly, while Mary lived, Cecil's régime and the protestant succession in England were unsafe. The problem was to get rid of her without appearing to make a martyr of her. The Scottish queen, if traditional history be correct, considerably supplied Cecil with the solution to a difficult problem by plotting indiscriminately and often; by writing indiscreetly to friends in Europe and Scotland letters which fell by most happy chance into the willing and waiting hands of Cecil and Walsingham.

The evidence of letters was corroborated by the confession on the rack—not least, Throckmorton's in 1584. But what is the value of such witness wrung from a man prepared to do or say anything to save himself from further agony, permanent disablement, and perhaps death? History is not a succession of isolated incidents especially when the main protagonists live long and act consistently by a programme. The confessions and negotiations in the Squire plot (not mentioned by Professor Black) prove the unreliability of the total process, and suggest the bad faith of those who organised it. How often did this happen before? How can one prove that such factors did not enter into the Queen of Scots' negotiations? How far did the activities of Phelippes the forger extend? Was it necessary for the government to employ so compromising a servant at all? There does not appear to be any ready-made answer at the present stage that research has reached. Once again, a great question mark still hangs over the true activities of those who found themselves in opposition to, and ultimately condemned by, the government.

In this instance our doubts are not dispelled by the behaviour of Walsingham in his efforts to obtain the final condemnation of the Queen. His letter of 9 July 1586 to Leicester on the same day that Phelippes arrived at Chartley to deliver the fateful Babington letter via the brewer, revealed in advance, as Professor Black pointedly observes, that Mary's answer would "break the

<sup>1</sup> p. 375.

neck of all conspiracies during the reign of Elizabeth." Walsingham could only have been referring to the Babington Plot. He was still "without a scrap of convincing evidence that Mary was involved in a criminal conspiracy against Elizabeth's life," and yet "his only fear is not that Mary will disappoint him, but that Elizabeth will not handle the matter with 'the secrecy that appertaineth.'"<sup>1</sup> Perhaps Elizabeth had better reason than historians generally have been willing to admit for her long reluctance in sending her royal prisoner to the block. The existence of this letter was overlooked, as Professor Black assures us, not only by Read but by Pollen. There was no reference to this letter in the earlier edition of Professor Black's work.

"The death of Mary Stuart had a simplifying effect on the problems with which England was confronted, for the Catholic cause lost most of its driving force."<sup>2</sup> This statement seems to assume too easily that the Catholicism of the time was, after all, merely a matter of politics and nothing deeper: but the point need not detain us. The Professor continues, "Except for unforeseen circumstances the succession was now assured to James, and the king of Scotland was certainly not a Catholic. Consequently the hopes of the Jesuits turned to Philip II and the Infanta." This is the generally accepted view, but the author himself does something to correct it in another place<sup>3</sup> by quoting Persons, "May Jesus Christ make him [James] a Catholic; for he would be a mirror to all the princes of Christendom." No doubt the Jesuits, in common with other Catholics in exile, were not insensible to what they owed the Spaniards on whose pensions they frequently lived. Some of them had been educated in seminaries and colleges supported at least in part by Spanish gold. Nevertheless it would be a mistake to suppose the Jesuits were exclusively pro-Spanish, certainly towards the end of Elizabeth's reign. Persons, whom most will readily accept as a typical Jesuit, wrote a letter to Possevino on 7 December 1602, rejecting hotly the idea that "we are all Spaniards; and that everything that is done in this state for the conversion of England is done likewise in the favour of Spain. . . ." On the contrary, he and the rest of the English Catholics desire only "to procure by all means possible a Catholic king of any nation whatsoever. . . ." As for James, "... if the King of Scots were to become a Catholic no one would be more

<sup>1</sup> p. 381.<sup>2</sup> p. 389.

p. 444.

welcome and acceptable to the English Catholics than he. . . ." As for Persons himself, he declares he would willingly give his blood to "see him converted and king of England. . . ."<sup>1</sup>

If it be suggested that, "of the intense patriotism which now surged through England they (Allen and Persons) knew and cared for nothing,"<sup>2</sup> it may be replied that in 1588, as in 1688, there were, no doubt, those who could distinguish between love for their country and love for the régime. If it was permissible to countenance the use of foreign force in getting rid of James II, it was equally permissible to use it in getting rid of Elizabeth I. One important difference in the two situations was that the attempt of 1688 was successful while the other was not. Historians have never been kind to failures. By all means condemn Persons for his countenancing invasion for some time after 1582. But the same logic must not allow one to approve of the Glorious Revolution—unless one admits that ultimately the struggle was not between constitutionalism and systematic rebellion, but between Catholicism and Protestantism. Certainly the event proved the unwisdom of military attempts to overthrow the régime. If the God of Battles was on the side of Spain, the clerk of the weather most certainly was not. Nevertheless neither Allen nor Persons nor anyone else involved could be blamed for lacking the gift of prophecy. All the same they miscalculated. The reconquest of England to Catholicism was to come about not through force of arms but through the power of example and the mysterious force that flows from martyrdom. The warfare was to be a moral one. Eventually, if there were to be any armistice, or alternative to unending "jihad" between Catholics and Protestants, the answer had to be through mutual toleration at the physical level. It is only fair to point out that Persons who had accepted the idea of using force against force was far-sighted enough to see, as time wore on, that the answer lay elsewhere. Was Persons the first, in fact, to write a formal treatise in English on toleration in his *A Treatise Tending to Mitigation* of 1607?

To insist, as Elizabeth did, that the Host be not elevated in the Christmas Mass of 1558 was an impertinence but not necessarily the act of a heretic, one may believe. Cases had been frequent in the past of dissensions between Popes and kings, between

<sup>1</sup> Copy of original: *Archivio di Stato: Firenze: Carteggi d'Inghilterra Fil.* 4185 f. 330.

<sup>2</sup> p. 393.



priests and administrators, but this did not involve apostasy. Later on, Louis XIV could oblige the worshippers in his private chapel at Versailles to face his own throne rather than the altar during sacred functions. This might have been the first step to schism, or simply the expression of a mild megalomania not to be interpreted too solemnly. In fact it was the latter. Similarly Elizabeth's action with regard to the traditional liturgy could be so interpreted particularly in view of her reassurances that she wished to avoid strife. Catholicism is more than another word for ritualism. While changes in the rite without proper authority could only cause unease, it need not involve heresy nor indicate a desire to abandon the Catholic fold. The Catholics of the sixteenth century were, no doubt, as aware of these simple facts as the Catholics of to-day. Hence it does not follow from their reluctance to act or speak strongly in the beginning that the vast Catholic majority of the country was simply indifferent for this reason. We must surely accept with reservation the statement that, "While therefore it is true to say that the vast bulk of the nation were untouched by any desire to revolt from the old faith, it is equally true to affirm that they were not moved by any marked desire to defend it."<sup>1</sup>

Professor Black is far too knowledgeable and well-informed to suppose that the doctrine of papal infallibility was invented in 1870. Nevertheless it suggests the people of England were extremely unaware in their religious conscience to say that, "The whole dispute about England's relations with Rome was beyond the lay mind."<sup>2</sup> But undoubtedly the author underlines a most important fact by pointing out that there had been four religious settlements "within the space of less than a generation." Surely the truth was that by the accession of Elizabeth everybody was hoping, and seeing reason in events to hope, that the religious situation would stabilise itself in accordance with the solution favoured by himself; and this without the necessity of personal protest, argument, rebellion, and still less, martyrdom. It was only when the situation threatened to become permanently stable in a Protestant sense that the Catholic majority took alarm. A smaller number, more heroic perhaps, and carrying no doubt the hopes of the majority always less heroic, took action. Action for some, especially the more feudally-minded, meant the rising

<sup>1</sup> p. 13.

<sup>2</sup> p. 13.



of the North. For every Catholic what that action should be provided a pretty problem, especially after the excommunication of Elizabeth in 1570.

Most of the more thoroughgoing protagonists in the religious struggle, including Gregory XIII, it seems, accepted assassination as a legitimate weapon. Huguenot writers, indeed, had been the first to establish the case for assassination philosophically and theologically. Although the problem of an irreformable tyrant encountering the resistance of irreducible subjects had been adumbrated at least as early as John of Salisbury, it was the Huguenot author of the *Vindiciae contra Tyrannos* who first attempted in more recent times a treatise on a question as old as Judith and Holofernes, and Brutus and Caesar—and for that matter as recent as Hitler and the rebellious officers. In these days this extreme remedy is no longer put forward by either Protestants or Catholics; and we may agree with Professor Black, perhaps, that Gregory was not above his age. Nevertheless Gregory was not alone, nor was it uncountenanced even among non-Catholic Englishmen in high position. Only a little before Elizabeth's death, the English Ambassador in Paris, Sir Thomas Parry, could write to Cecil describing a murderous attack on the Jesuit, Père Cotton, "... a gentleman passed by on horseback, and after him a lackey who, lifting up the leather of the coach-side, and seeing where Cotton sat, immediately drew his rapier, and thrust him through the top of the right shoulder, the sword, glancing along, by misfortune missed his throat. . . ."<sup>1</sup>

Undoubtedly our author is right in thinking that even in that ruthless age Catholics regarded the moral weapon as the only one that would, in the long run, effect the conversion of England, and as time passed they came to rely on it increasingly. Indeed, after the celebrated *Explanatio* of 14 April 1580<sup>2</sup> the effects of the excommunication were lifted as far as Catholics were concerned for an indefinite time ahead. Whatever justification the government may have had from their own point of view in the decade preceding, from now on they were morally obliged to treat every Catholic on his own individual merits. Where there was no proof of plotting against the Queen, or of political activity

<sup>1</sup> P.R.O.: S.P. 78: Vol. 51: Parry to Cecil: 5 January 1603.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. J. H. Pollen, *The English Catholics in the Reign of Queen Elizabeth*, p. 293 et seq.

against her government, every condemnation of priest or Catholic—whatever the word of the law might define as treason—amounted in fact to persecution for religion alone: and those who died in consequence died true martyrs. Everard Hanse, as Pollen assures us, appears to have been the first of a long line who accepted Elizabeth as queen, and the Catholic faith as completely compatible with their political allegiance.

The form of the *Explanatio* made the solution a temporary one. All the same, to devise such a solution was by no means the same thing as shelving it. The Elizabethan government were not grateful for this papal concession for the very good reason that it made compromise with Catholicism seem, after all, possible and even reasonable. Hence its best efforts were bent in the direction of discrediting the concession and reducing it to nothing so that persecution could continue to be painted in purely political colours. Professor Black makes mention of the *Explanatio*, but does he explain the full significance of it? He merely remarks, "It increased the suspicion with which the Jesuits were regarded by the government, and afforded Burghley stronger grounds for the accusation he brought against them." Is this true? If Burghley had really desired peace, and had been ready for compromise on the French model, could not this have been the basis of it? But Burghley was against all idea of toleration for deep reasons. In his undated essay, *An antidote against Jesuitism*, written some time after 1580, one must suppose, he declares, speaking of papists,

... to suffer them to be strong with hope that with reasons they will be contented carried with it in my opinion but a fair enamelling of a terrible danger. For first man's nature is not only to strive against a person's smart but to revenge any past injury. ... Again for to make them contented absolutely, I do not see how your Majesty either in conscience will do, or in policy may do it, since you cannot thoroughly content them but that you must of necessity more thoroughly discontent your faithful subjects, and to fasten a reconciled love with the loosening of a certain love is to build houses with the sale of lands.<sup>1</sup>

Well might the writer of this fear the men who came from Rome and Douai—not for their daggers but for their burning zeal and sincerity.

The coming of the seminary priests and Jesuits undoubtedly

<sup>1</sup> Petyt MSS.: Series 538: Vol. 43, f. 304 *et seq.*: cf. *ibid.*, Vol. 37, f. 171 *et seq.*

precipitated the persecution of Catholicism. They brought new flame to embers that had been allowed to die, and brought home to Burghley the truth of Persons's words quoted by Professor Black, "You are persecuting a corporation that will never die, and sooner will your hearts and hands, sated with blood, fail you, than that there will be lacking men eminent for virtue and learning, who will be sent by this Society, and allow their blood to be shed by you for this cause."<sup>1</sup> The Catholic Church in England refused to die peacefully. It must therefore be killed.

The legislation of 1581 proved beyond doubt that the government accepted the coming of the seminaries and Jesuits as a challenge, and threw down their own gage in reply. As Professor Black justly remarks, "So long as loyalty to the state was interpreted in terms of loyalty to the Anglican Church, and loyalty to the Roman Church involved acceptance of the papal bull, there could be no separation between politics and religion."<sup>2</sup> But as we have seen, "acceptance of the papal bull" meant also acceptance of the *Explanatio* which could be interpreted and received as a face-saving retreat from the excommunication of Pius V. It offered the first possibility of peaceful co-existence. Instead the government brought it about that, in the Professor's words, "all the conditions incidental to a reign of terror prevailed. The innocent suffered with the guilty . . . [the government] introduced a system of judicial enquiry as bad as that practised by the Spanish Inquisition which it professed to abhor." Small wonder that those Catholics who escaped to the continent, including Fr. Persons, should have thought at first in terms of an invasion to bring relief to the mangled body of the Catholic Church in England. That Church, after all, still lay closest, as far as we can tell, to the consciences of the vast majority, even though they were prepared to temporise to the limit to avoid the terrible consequences of living in a police-state.

Professor Black makes the point made elsewhere—and we need not dispute it—that fewer perished under Elizabeth than in the brief reign of Mary. The human suffering involved, however, was to be measured not by the number of deaths caused by the persecution, but in terms also of the expropriation and terror which stalked its victims year after year, without respite or hope of release. It is not only cowards, after all, who die many times

<sup>1</sup> p. 181.

<sup>2</sup> p. 186.

before their death, and suffer the pangs of death in consequence.

Interesting additions to this second edition have been inspired by the work of Fr. Leo Hicks, S.J., and in particular by his *Robert Cecil, Father Persons, and the Succession*. It may come as a surprise to many to learn that Robert Cecil was not always the wholehearted adherent to the cause of the Scottish king's accession. Revealing is it to see that Cecil was prepared to go so far at one time as to contact Persons through an intermediary with a view to negotiating the succession of Clara Eugenia. The fall of Essex and his party, however, made any such realignment of policy unnecessary, and the Chief Secretary reverted speedily to his earlier policy, clasping hands with James, as our author aptly remarks, over the body of the dead Earl. The not-necessarily baneful influence of Persons in the negotiation is dealt with in some detail.<sup>1</sup>

The affairs of Wisbeach and, indeed, the Archpriest controversy into which they poured like a muddy stream into a troubled sea, still await the pen of the historian. Nevertheless with the appearance of Fr. Caraman's edition of William Weston's autobiography, and the volume of Wisbeach documents published by the Catholic Record Society, it is surely no longer possible to say without considerable reservation, "Simultaneously the so-called 'stirs' began at Wisbeach Castle, in the diocese of Ely, occasioned by the attempt of Fr. Weston, a Jesuit, to set up a moral censorship over the little community of priests who were imprisoned there."<sup>2</sup>

The final word on Professor Black's new edition must be one of appreciation. He has courageously resisted any temptation to follow a "party line" in representing the reign of Elizabeth as a progress from one Tilbury to the next. Her greatness is not denied: but neither are her weaknesses. He has picked his way warily and skilfully through the controversies of the period. Rarely is he condescending or censorious; still less, bitter. Even where one cannot always completely agree, one must respect the evident desire to reach the truth, and to deal with issues fairly and honestly. Every writer of history is doomed to be superseded. This work, however, may well continue to be read as literature even when its history is no longer considered to be completely up to date. One cannot pay an historian a larger compliment.

<sup>1</sup> pp. 441-51.

<sup>2</sup> p. 454.

# TASTE IN RELIGIOUS ART

By

ERIC JOHN

ART HAS SOMETHING to do with taste, and there is no disputing about taste. No disputing, that is, about a preference for roast beef over roast mutton; but a taste for art is a taste of the mind, not of the palate. In other words, the word *taste*, when used in discourse about works of art, is used metaphorically, and the veto on discussion can hardly apply. Taste, even in its literal sense, can have associations and a context which gives it a kind of general meaning, and one which is open to public inspection. Proust and his madeleine is an obvious example. Certainly, once something satisfies an intellectual appetite, or upsets a mental digestion, discussion is bound to set in. The point of talking about taste at all is to stress the obvious fact that the experience of a work of art must begin in sensuous apprehension: unless we feel in some measure what the artist intended us to feel, we should have nothing to talk about, and certainly nothing relevant to say. But once a work of art has been "experienced" at the sensuous level, if it is a serious work of art, the experience demands contemplation; then it can be thought about and discussed, even if it cannot be explained.

The study of any art, then, and particularly religious art, though it begins as a matter of taste and appreciation, cannot preclude appraisal and controversy. But, as in any controversy, discussion must be about matters of fact, and will require relevant information. Baldly stated thus, the argument may sound simply uncouth, or mistaken; it demands to be set out at greater length, with some examples.

Religious art differs from other kinds of art in having a peculiarly strict and altogether "given" context. It does not differ merely in having a context—all art has that; otherwise

works of art would be private to the artist and boring to anyone else. Religious art differs by reason of the nature of the context, and the degree to which that context is "given." I do not mean by this that a religious painting or sculpture consists of a kernel of pure form surrounded by a husk of theological information. I mean that the sensuous apprehension of the work in question begins in and from a grasp of the facts of the case which are there on the canvas, in the stone. Not all these facts are unique to this particular work of art; some of them are the common property of Christians. In other words, one must understand a work of religious art as well as appreciate it, and the two activities cannot readily be separated. It is necessary to treat a work of art as a story, even a treatise, at the same time as receiving it in a way in which words hardly exist to express—though a fine critic can sometimes point out things and relations in a work of art which help us to see the work in a new light. To those brought up, as most of us were, on Roger Fry and Clive Bell, this will seem heresy. But none the less painters and sculptors, good ones at that, have said the same, and practised what they said to some effect.

An obvious example is Velazquez' *Immaculate Conception*, which is made up of simple visual quotations from traditional sources, principally the Litany of Our Lady. It may be argued that this is adventitious, that what matters is the form the objects are given. But only *things* have a shape; and the need to make the things recognisable is an important element in the final form which the picture takes. Nor will it do to say that the need to make the objects in the picture recognisable is simply a limitation to be overcome. This would be like saying that the snow and the rock-face were simply adventitious limitations to be overcome in the achievement of climbing Everest. Obviously the conquest of Everest *was* the climbing of a lot of rock and snow; likewise the painting of the Immaculate Conception was the making of harmony of shapes out of a selection of prescribed objects which must remain precisely recognisable. The picture, in fact, is a model of controlled and deeply felt theology. The representation of the Conception itself is pure genius, and perfectly obvious, like all the best theology. All we have is simply a large and ordinary Spanish girl standing on a world with a golden cloud behind her, and one tiny spot of gold on her stomach which



provides the centre of gravity of the picture. The Immaculate Conception is, after all, a rather abstract doctrine; yet Velazquez has set it out intelligibly, and made it moving as well. Moving, that is, to people who are sensitive to visual representation, and to people who have some knowledge of and interest in the meaning of the Incarnation. To point to the way in which the painterly taking in of the theology of his theme accounts for the greatness of this picture, let us compare it for a moment with a bad religious painting, Holman Hunt's *Light of the World*. On the technical level Hunt was very far from being a bad painter. And some of his religious paintings, *The Scapegoat* for instance, deserve more than the cavalier dismissal they usually get. But there is nothing to be said for the *Light of the World*. What is more, its failure is theological. For Hunt, Christ amounted to a big man with a big light and a big heart, knocking on a big door surrounded by lots of brambles. The symbolism is of the crudest, nothing has been seriously thought out, and all Hunt's undeniable skill cannot make the picture work, or make it move us to anything except distaste.

I should like to take Nicholas Poussin as a second example. Poussin was actually prepared to talk freely of the necessity of reading his pictures; and any study of them shows that he meant what he said. No painter, in fact, appeals to a more delicate sensibility, no painter was less of a philistine; and one root of his art was nothing more intellectual than a feeling for the landscape of the Roman Campagna on a late summer afternoon. Poussin was also attracted to a kind of philosophical theology, and he combined this with his feeling for landscape in a series of remarkable pictures. Amongst the finest of them is probably the series of variations on the theme of death in Arcady. To look at either of the two *Arcadian Shepherds*, or the splendid dead shepherd in the National Gallery, is to take in the essence of the Roman landscape shaped into a profound meditation on mortality. To have a taste for Poussin is to be deeply moved, but in a definite direction. Poussin was a great visualiser, a great manipulator of painted form. But he also felt deeply about things outside the world of art that really matter; and because of this he can make our world a different place, if we will let him. This is underlined if we compare Poussin's *Arcadian Shepherds* with Guercino's attempt at the same subject, now in

the Barberini Palace. The Guercino is by any standards magnificent; but it seems to me to fail to work on the deepest level. The story—the finding of death in Arcady itself—is not communicated by the picture as a whole. Arcady is wonderfully conveyed by the rich, voluptuous colours and the easy sensuous poses of the shepherds; but death is introduced less successfully. The symbolism is the conventional medieval emblem of death, the talking skull. But it is here represented at a rakish angle with a suggestion of the romantic ruin, rather than the bite of decay. The picture is beautiful, and will bear a great deal of looking at. But Poussin's two attempts at the same theme are of a different order. In the first, the conventional skull is virtually unobtrusive; in the second he has eliminated it altogether. But the power of pictures imparts an intellectual shock. The eager, almost heedless, spelling out of the inscription on the tomb by the shepherds, which will shatter their touching, but complacent, enthusiasm in a moment, the exquisitely resigned figure of the river-god Alphaeus who knows already, gather together the gentle, idyllic atmosphere of the whole picture in a way which tells the story. This is not a picture containing a *memento mori* together with symbols of Arcady; it is a picture which is Arcadian and shot through with intimations of mortality at the same time. It seems therefore only right to say that the Poussin is a greater picture than the Guercino, and that the difference lies in the fact that Poussin thought in paint in a way which was beyond Guercino.

Let us now turn to Bernini's sculptures on religious themes. Not only do these pose directly the question of the primacy of formal or ideological considerations by the violent assault they make on the spectator's taste, but they have largely suggested the thesis I am defending.

One source of Bernini's mature style is obviously the later work of Michelangelo, coupled with a desire to go beyond the limits of the classical manner of the high renaissance and to represent movement in a way that had not been possible until then, even for a Michelangelo. At the same time, Bernini's work is rooted in a deeply-felt and Jesuit-directed spirituality. The combination of the two sources of inspiration led Bernini to affront every canon of conventional good taste, for which even today many cannot forgive him. The tendency is to say, "If only Bernini had stuck to Michelangelo and kept his religion for

Sundays, how much better a sculptor he would have been!" This, of course, begs the question as to whether Michelangelo, any more than Bernini, can be appreciated in terms of pure form; or whether, as I would maintain, Bernini learnt the duty of mixing technique and ideology from Michelangelo as much as he did from any Jesuit spiritual director. In any case, it seems to be plainly a wrong-headed view. Some of Bernini's greatest works would probably have looked much the same whatever he had believed. The *David*, the *Rape of Proserpina* and the principal fountains, belong more perhaps to the history of style than to the history of ideas. But for the most part, Bernini's technical virtuosity was disciplined by his concern to express his religious beliefs. This is clear enough when we turn to the *Teresa* or the much-derided tomb of Alexander VII. No one is likely to deny that both these works are technically brilliant, but this has practically nothing to do with whether one likes them or not. The *Teresa* is an attempt to represent in stone the religious experience described by St. Teresa in her writings. Bernini has done this in the only way open to the sculptor of such a subject, by the manipulation of the expressions and gestures of the figures, in the terrible combination of the sweet and tender angel letting the arrow into the heart of the wan, agonised Teresa. The result is offensive because it is powerful and disturbing. The tomb of Alexander VII makes the same point, even more trenchantly. The cold, marble figure of the praying Pope would, taken by itself, amount to no more than an unusually elegant but otherwise commonplace portrait of an ecclesiastical dignitary whose *métier* was to be pious. But the white marble figure is imposed on incredible jasper draperies and a brutal, brass, skeleton with a scythe and hourglass. The whole composition is fantastic, but it is right. This is a Pope's tomb; consequently for a seventeenth-century papist sensitive to the disputes about the Pope's place in the Church, it was a commission which called for an epiphany of power, the greatest possible power in the Catholic world. Bernini therefore opposed the power of the earthly head of the Church to the power of death. He made the symbols of the power of death commit the most violent and disruptive assault on the feelings possible. He deliberately abandoned propriety by mixing his materials, and rejecting any notion of "truth to material," he made the solid jasper look

like some rich, heavy textile. On top of this contrived and precisely delineated disorder, he set a simple, classical, calm, white figure of the Pope at prayer, which at once draws the whole composition into an ordered unity, at the same time exquisitely putting the symbols of death in their proper place. This is a spirituality and an art for which death has evident terrors, but for which faith and prayer are equally evident antidotes. If we find the tomb repellent, let us be clear whether it is what it says or what it looks like that we are rejecting: the tomb is a great piece of sculptured rhetoric which stands or falls by the taking or refusing of its point.

This point, moreover, was not one to be taken in seventeenth-century Roman circles only. It was important enough to move easily across the bitter theological frontiers which the Reformation had erected across Europe. I do not suppose John Bunyan had ever heard of Bernini, nor is there any Jesuit influence to be found in *Pilgrim's Progress*. But I can think of no closer parallel in feeling and tone to the tomb of Alexander VII than the closing passages from *Pilgrim's Progress*. More particularly, Bernini's *Teresa* might have been an illustration for one of those passages, the summoning of Christiana who was sent a token: "The token was an arrow with a point sharpened by love, let easily into her heart, which by degrees wrought so effectively with her, that at the time appointed she must be gone."

In spite of the divisions of Christendom, Bernini, Bunyan and the Jesuits told rather similar stories in a common Christian language, which cannot therefore have been merely private and individual, or the mere reflection of the times they lived in.

Nothing I have said or could say can make anyone else have a taste for Bernini. At the bottom of the matter is the root of all appreciation of works of art, a personal preference for, or rejection of, the work of art in question. This preference, in so far as it is feeling, is inaccessible to argument, but it is by no means pure feeling. Such preferences are always mixed feelings, directed by intelligence, recollection and understanding, and they can be clarified and refined, although never created. A taste for art, then, is not like a taste for oysters. It is compounded out of a respect for meaning and a feeling for form and colour that is only arrived at after a term of reflection and discussion. I do not wish to plead that we *may* dispute about taste in religious art but

to assert dogmatically that we *must*, if we are to do any kind of justice to the complexity which informs every work of art with any claim to merit. I am not saying "Art is pure form, of course, but please let there be some place for story." On the contrary, I wish to maintain that a good story is part of the forms presented for contemplation. Everyone knows we must allow for form in those works of art which are made of words. I wish merely to say that, likewise, we must allow for narrative in those works which are made chiefly of colours and shapes.

This is an impure world; but it would be a mistake to confuse complexity with impurity. All art, and especially religious art, is saturated with what I should call human complexity. It touches thoughts and feelings which simply cannot be expressed, only endured; but it also makes connections, arouses reminiscences or proposes ideas which have to be talked about to be sorted out. Let us then accept these complications, and repay our debt to the artists by giving them the whole of our attention, and responding with right feeling and relevant talk.

## REVIEWS

### ARCHAEOLOGY AND THE BIBLE

*Archaeology and the Old Testament*, by J. B. Pritchard (Oxford University Press 30s).

*The Gospels: Their Origin and their Growth*, by F. C. Grant (Faber 21s).

NEITHER of these books is intended for the expert—in fact, Dr. Pritchard wishes his own to serve as an "introduction" to a "study" of those "results" of the past century which relate to the Bible. Still, his concern is "with the question: How has history, as written in the Bible, been changed, enlarged, or substantiated by the past century of archaeological work?" How many questions at once arise! What is History? "As written . . ." Are there, then, various ways of writing it? A special Biblical way (or ways) of writing it? If the Biblical way needs "changing," is the doctrine of inspiration and inerrancy affected? Can we always trust the translations made by specialists, since the "gravitational pull" of our Jacobean English almost inevitably reaches them? Leaving such topics for the moment, we recalled that our religious education at home and at school had been "Old Testament," and that once the Israelites had crossed the



Jordan "Palestine" became as it were an isolated unity, whose people no doubt might be attacked and even deported and were finally "dispersed," while remaining somehow after all God's chosen People, hedged off, unparalleled. But how dull! Dull, when the old heroic days were over—the Red Sea, Sinai; Jordan and Jericho; Samson; David, Goliath, Saul. Who could tackle the Prophets (except Jonah and perhaps bits of Daniel)? And you might early have found that Egypt was far more picturesque and exciting; Persia, Babylon, Assyria seemed rather remote; and then Greece and Rome invaded the imagination, and Palestine shrank into a little patch of land with a rock having a temple on it that you couldn't even visualise. Dr. Pritchard makes an informative and indeed entertaining résumé of the work done (and still needing to be done, though the difficulties can hardly but increase) and its method, so that Biblical Palestine has come to life again, and its ancient lore, its cults, its progressive legislation and morality and "wisdom;" and though this book is not controversial, it ought to make it instantly clear how unique an element persisted from the earliest times we know of among the Hebrews. The book is lavishly illustrated.

While paying full respect to the learning, reverence and modesty of Dr. Grant, we feel that he is attempting the impossible. No one supposes that the Synoptic Gospels or even one of them was written directly after the Ascension. There is a blank and empty interval. What happened during it? How did three documents begin to circulate, by no means identical, but sometimes word for word the same; at other times, puzzlingly different? "Hypothesis" is throughout necessary, though the author warns us against taking a hypothesis for a demonstration, or leaning one hypothesis on another. Yet his chapter on "the Hellenistic John" seems to us to consist of little else. "He surely must have . . . he evidently could not . . ." Had the Fourth Gospel been written at Antioch, Matthew could not have been unknown to or unused by its writer; if at Ephesus, it is equally unaccountable that it should "so completely disregard Paul's teaching"! "In its outward form it appears to be historical; but history, in the strict sense, was the last thing in the world its author thought he was writing . . . it was Hellenistic religious mystery-drama brought down to earth and forced to make terms with a tradition—not extensive or exhaustive—of the kind that underlies the earlier Gospel of Mark." John insists (against the developing Gnosticism) that Christ had existed, but *presents* him "in the garb of a Hellenistic mystagogue": but (to our mind) if the author was *not* a personal eye-witness he was, simply, a liar—quite different from the men who wrote under the names of "Enoch," or even Solomon. Well, all the Evangelists wrote "dogmatic history;" they could omit, or rearrange chronologically,



incidents rejected by, or sanctioned by authoritative tradition; each could emphasise what suited those for whom he was immediately writing. Vastly more sober than most of the "dissectionists" whom he discards, Dr. Grant still leaves one under the impression that Matthew and even Luke had Mark's manuscript before them and cut parts out of it and laid others aside, and what an author did not write, he did not know. This kind of view of "sources" seems to us to dehumanise the evangelists: they did not remain immobile; they may easily have met one another and discussed what they proposed to write and why they preferred their turn of speech: why, *e.g.*, Matthew wrote something simply because assonance of words suggested it. "Q" is unnecessary, though a firm tradition is not. In fine, we have not got to judge any of the gospels by the canons which control the composition of modern books, certainly not "biographies" which they do not profess to offer. One detail—nothing will persuade us that Luke ended *Acts* as he did, later than 63 A.D.; his gospel, therefore, preceded it. But Dr. Grant sees well that "the Bible is the Church's book," and we have no difficulty in seeing that it is Christ's doctrine that shines throughout "St. John," even when the words and their disposition may be those of the beloved disciple (who, we consider, provides quite as much straight "history" as the Synoptists do); as for the doctrine of inspiration and consequent inerrancy, these are for theologians to discuss and not the affair of this book of literary criticism and speculation. But we shall never detect what "sources" preceded our gospels, nor ever prove that Matthew and Luke borrowed from a "Mark," ours or an earlier one.

C. C. MARTINDALE

#### EAST AND WEST

*The Greek East and the Latin West: A Study in the Christian Tradition,*  
by Philip Sherrard (Oxford University Press 25s).

MR. PHILIP SHERRARD has written a book of quite exceptional interest: unbalanced, partial, inconclusive, but brilliantly original and, after the first two pages, extremely well written. One may disagree with most of his views—indeed, his book is highly unorthodox—and yet find his pages immensely stimulating. It is not with dogmatic differences between East and West that he is concerned, but with the profound schism of the mind arising from philosophical presuppositions so basically different that the relatively few dogmatic disputes cloak deep divergences in the interpretation of Christianity.

Mr. Sherrard's criticisms of the "Western Church" are the weakest part of the book; they are generally mistaken, and even when he puts his finger on the right spots his diagnosis is somewhat intemperate. A champion of the Platonic tradition (in a sense so esoteric that it

includes Neo-platonism and even Pre-platonism), Mr. Sherrard regards Aristotelianism as the *fons et origo malorum* in later Christianity; he considers it an essentially and incorrigibly naturalistic philosophy, which St. Thomas baptised without effectively exorcising. But then, from his *exposé* of the Angelic Doctor's account of the mind he leaves out St. Thomas's doctrines of inner experience, of the divine immanence in creation and the image of God in the soul.

It would, however, be too much to expect of any one book that it should do justice to the traditions of both East and West. What gives this book its value is its emphasis on the transcendent character of the Christian revelation and its appeal for the wider recognition of the Eastern *mystique*, an appeal whose passionate eloquence is reinforced by a most interesting account of the thought of some little-known Eastern scholars, theologians and poets. And what wins one's sympathies is the author's desire, in face of an East and West alike secularised, to recreate a Christian *mystique* of living, a way of life that, equally removed from materialism and Manicheism, shall mould a Christian *élite* whose conversation in this world shall match the sacramental Mysteries. But the unwritten tradition, whether esoteric or popular, from which Mr. Sherrard professes to draw his inspiration turns out (as in the end, indeed, he seems to admit) to have little substance or content. Is not the Gospel enough? The day will perhaps come when Mr. Sherrard, discovering how much Platonism there is in St. Thomas and introduced both to the Franciscan tradition of spirituality as exemplified by St. Bonaventure and the contemporary Catholic biblical and patristic revivals, will find his dream realised in the Church.

A. A. STEPHENSON

#### DOCTRINE WITHOUT ADHERENTS

*Positivist Thought in France during the Second Empire, 1852-1870*, by D. G. Charlton (Oxford, Clarendon Press 35s).

LIKE SOME CARTOGRAPHER mistrusting the boldly inked-in lines on his predecessors' maps, Mr. D. G. Charlton has covered a lot of difficult ground in a fresh effort to define the treacherous contours of French positivist thought from 1852 to 1870. If he has discovered nothing of which the existence was not hitherto suspected he has succeeded, often brilliantly, in codifying and demonstrating the nature and precise significance of positivist influence during the Second Empire and in sketching the relative importance for positivist thought of its major exponents.

Here is the demonstration that Comte's personal influence was slighter than we used to believe, that it is by no means possible to consider the Second Empire simply as the age of positivism, that

positivism need not have hatched scientism, its cuckoo's egg, had it not been for the influence of Hegel, but that positivism's historical perspectives rendered Hegel the most likely ally from the very outset. Comte had considered him "le plus capable de pousser la philosophie positive," but both Renan and Taine show that the Hegelian experience led inevitably away from the restrained scepticism of the true positivist into the relative extravagances of the religion of science.

The author's opening attempt to define positivism clears away convincingly much of the obscurity created by fairly constant misuse of the term. Positivism implies a theory of knowledge—that we can know only phenomena and the laws of relation and succession of phenomena—but it is equally an *état d'esprit*, an attitude based on the rejection of all non-empirical modes of knowledge as invalid. The attitude was widespread and influential, though never unchallenged, but the integral positivist, who never deserted his major epistemological premiss, was certainly an *avis rarissima*. Comte abandoned strict positivism by accepting for his criterion of moral good the direction of nature's development through the somewhat arbitrary three states; Littré's resignation to metaphysical ignorance did not prevent his advancing a non-positivistic ethical doctrine. Renan and Taine both looked for knowledge of the forbidden and "unknowable" realms; so that if Claude Bernard almost alone remained faithful to the positivist viewpoint it was because only he could afford to profess ethical agnosticism since he alone was uninterested in social science.

The book surveys these thinkers and ends with a consideration of the positivist influence on the Parnassian poets, on Louise Ackermann and Sully Prudhomme. Except for J. S. Mill, little attention is paid to positivism outside France, but in that country the vicissitudinous history of the positivist attitude is recounted clearly and with considerable penetration. The attenuation of true positivism in all the principal exponents is fairly and skilfully developed and one can scarcely fail to deepen one's understanding of the positivist roots of much twentieth-century philosophy from this well-written and nuanced account.

ANTHONY LEVI

#### TUDOR RECIPES

*Star Chamber Dinner Accounts*, by André L. Simon (Wine and Food Society £3 3s).

HOWEVER much worry the Dinner Accounts of the Star Chamber may have caused Clerks and Royal Comptrollers of the time, the collection of them made and edited by André Simon and produced by George Rainbird for the Wine and Food Society is nothing but

a source of fascination. André Simon has 250 such accounts in his possession, ranging from 1519 to 1639, but has chosen only the fifty which cover Shakespeare's life "because of the added literary interest." These he has given us not only in their straight form, priced item by item under years and terms and days, but also, more readably, in sections headed meat, poultry and game, fish, fruit, etc., in which one may find all the food, amazing no less in variety than quantity, which was eaten by the Lords of the Star Chamber, together with a commentary on the prices and their fluctuations, the manner of eating, of cooking and of serving; historical and etymological remarks; and for nearly every item a quotation from contemporary literature in which it figures, the search for which must have given M. Simon much pleasure, though I would question his support of crabs in the Fish section with "When roasted crabs hiss in the bowl" from *Love's Labour Lost*. (Crab apples, surely?) Finally, by way of encouragement to the modern gastronome, he provides a selection of quite possible Tudor recipes taken from contemporary sources.

This kind of work is like a museum which needs frequent visiting before its store of information can be properly assimilated and interpreted in terms of economic, political, literary and even religious situations. But even less serious dips can bring up provoking questions, as for instance why a gull (fed on beef for a fortnight) should cost more than a capon or a goose; why a pheasant (11s. each then and not much more now) should have so greatly declined in real value, and the reasons for which in 1605 the Sovereign spent as much (15s.) in one term on rosewater for his Privy Council as on their butler's wages. A mine of knowledge and reference and handsomely set up (the title page is especially pleasing), the Wine and Food Society must be happy to have this book by their President.

BRIGID LAVER

## SHORTER NOTICES

*The Idea of Apostolicity in Byzantium and the Legend of the Apostle Andrew*, by Francis Dvornik (Dumbarton Oaks Studies IV: Harvard University Press: London, Oxford University Press 48s).

*The Homilies of Photius*, translated and edited by Cyril Mango (Dumbarton Oaks Studies III: Harvard University Press: London, Oxford University Press 48s).

THE STORY of the gradual advance of Constantinople to the position of the second church in Christendom, and the theoretical justification for that position by the building up of a legend of the

apostolic labours of Andrew on the Bosporus site and the consecration there of Stachys as first bishop, provide an interesting contrast to the historical presence of Peter at Rome and the early acknowledgement of the primacy there. On the one hand, stubborn facts, a gospel warrant and an early artistic tradition; on the other, the apocryphal *Acts of Andrew* (from the late third century or early fourth) and a departure from the earlier tradition, which sent Andrew to the Scythians of the Crimea. Even Photius seems to have accepted the Petrine position of Rome and to have felt that the Andrew-legend was not worth using in support of his own patriarchal throne. The last of the *Homilies* here published by Mr. Mango contains striking evidence of this acceptance, so striking indeed that the passage was omitted when the Greek text was printed in Constantinople in 1900. Professor Dvornik devotes nearly half his book to a careful history of the idea of an apostolic church in the four centuries down to Chalcedon and gives a useful account of the development of the patriarchates. He has, however, missed the early use of the term *apostolicus* for the Pope (applied to Siricius in 385) and might have done better to consider, as a pilot-model for the church organisation, the pattern of provincial councils and priesthoods devoted to emperor-worship, rather than the cadres of the civil administration. No student of the history of the Church can afford to neglect these two new publications from Dumbarton Oaks.

*The Easter Enigma*, by Michael C. Perry (Faber 21s).

MR. PERRY'S BOOK is an attempt to use the data of telepathy to illustrate the doctrine of the Resurrection of Christ. He gives a modernised form of the "telegram from heaven" theory (according to which Christ is supposed to have created in the apostles an assurance that they had seen Him without any use of His bodily presence) and in a final chapter rides away from it on an *O, altitudo*, saying that the Resurrection was much more than just a bit of telepathy. He is very cavalier with the awkward facts of the eating and drinking, and as for the fire lit by the risen Christ on the lake-shore, that is said to have been there "naturally." The whole work is immature, and, although Mr. Perry makes abundant use of the material about apparitions gathered by the S.P.R., most of it is, in his own words, "of very doubtful bearing on the question in hand." A striking omission is that of the contrast between Stephen's vision and the bodily manifestations of Christ to the apostles. The empty tomb wrecks any telegram theory; Mr. Perry realises this but has no answer.

*The Life of St. Thomas Aquinas: Biographical Documents*, translated and edited with an Introduction by Kenelm Foster, O.P. (Longmans 30s).

MR. KENELM logically considers what we can know evidentially about St. Thomas as a man, relying chiefly on the *Life* by Bernard Gui and witnesses adduced at the saint's canonisation. This is necessary, given the diagrammatic, uncoloured writings of St. Thomas himself, save indeed in his hymns, where his tenderness and even passionate heart are revealed. Even the narrative is here and there enlivened by some incident as tersely told as ever Thomas would have wished. He was in the church, and noticed a certain Romanus who had succeeded Thomas at Paris. "Welcome, brother; and when did you arrive?" "I am in fact dead," said Romanus, "but have permission to visit you . . ." Thomas, recovering, said, "Well, since you have permission, I will ask you a question." It concerned the vision of God, and no wonder Romanus eluded it! Erudite comment and criticism are reserved for notes wisely relegated to the end of each section since they sometimes need to be lengthy, but even so the personality of Aquinas does emerge, and we marvel at it. For, somewhat as we can say that Mozart from childhood simply *was* music, and Pascal, mathematics, so the saint, despite his agitated life, simply *was* "thought," indeed, wisdom. Of course he had to study; but seemingly his mind moved continuously forward, or, if by chance his thought became as it were knotted, he prayed, and disentanglement took place. Of course, too, this implied extreme concentration, and could *calm effort* be more perfectly portrayed than it was by Fra Angelico, chosen as frontispiece? And yet, after the great ecstasy of 6 December 1273, he felt that what he had written was but straw, and stopped his work on the *Summa*. In March 1274 he died on his way to the Council of Lyons, aged fifty. An illuminating and strangely moving book.

*Flight and Pursuit*, by Stuart Holroyd (Gollancz 21s).

*A Secular Journal*, by Thomas Merton (Hollis and Carter 15s).

MR. HOLROYD has written his autobiography when nearly twenty-five; one cannot reproach a young man for being self-conscious, or even for wanting to tell others about himself, if he feels he cannot but write and is sincere so far as possible. For the beginnings of development need to be registered, and may easily be forgotten or distorted by later experiences. In Mr. Holroyd's background were a cynical father, a strictly Methodist mother, and Blackpool. Early in his 'teens he was keeping a copious journal, and not long afterwards had read so many books that he had lost all sense



of being anyone in particular save for the constant nagging of the flesh. Hence at no time had he any training for so active a mind. It is much to his credit that he felt he ought to be someone, and his book is but a "prelude" to an unremitting "quest for identity." He was an "angry young man," but not so tiresome as to be merely that. Having kicked away all directives, he could not believe he must step only into a vacuum: one horrible night he realised that he was no exception—one day he would die—would anyone or anything *mind*? Total indifference: he would have given nothing because he had been nothing, a sort of Peer Gynt without a Solveig. Perhaps the chapter on "Immortality" is of special value: he sees that he cannot conclude to fact from a mere feeling or wish, nor is belief to be just the final click of a syllogism. We cannot trace his passage to belief in God, but he has not grasped the principle of analogy which enables us to know so much *about* Him. But he has reached the sense of responsibility, so that St. Matthew would, I think, think him already not far from the Kingdom.

Thomas Merton's *Secular Journal* is also a young man's book, being pages from what he wrote after he had become a Catholic but was not sure what to do with himself—whether to become a Trappist or to associate himself with Baroness de Hueck's work. She had fled from the Reds in Finland in 1917, started "Friendship House" in Toronto in 1930; moved to Harlem in 1938, where she worked for "inter-racial justice," and in 1947 founded "Madonna House" at Combermere, Ontario, as a centre for all sorts of Catholic lay-work which has already many branches. It seems to serve, primarily, those who are often treated as social pariahs, that mixture of Mexicans, Indians, Negroes and others of whom we are practically unaware. We would like to know much more about this noble experiment, which we hope will never be too rigidly regimentalised. But apart from an amusing section about a visit to Cuba, the scattered thoughts which make up the bulk of the book are of less interest since we already know the end of the story. In this volume, the decision to go to the Cistercian monastery of Gethsemani rather than to work in Harlem was due to his thinking he would have more to give up, as a Trappist, including (he specifically says) writing. But this sacrifice has certainly not been asked of him, and our fear is, rather, that he may over-write himself.

*An Approach to the Metaphysics of Plato through the Parmenides*, by William F. Lynch, S.J. (Georgetown University Press 6s).

**A**FTER the Bible, few writings have been so studied and commented on as has the Platonic corpus. Within that corpus the *Parmenides*

has come in for at least its fair share of analysis and interpretation. Inevitably therefore we pick up a new book on the dialogue with the feeling that we are not likely to learn anything very important. Fr. Lynch soon makes us realise that we have presumed too much. His approach is bold and forthright, yet it takes account of everything, it would seem, that has been said before. Neatly he tabulates the different schools of thought, the different conclusions which have been drawn about the significance of this most difficult and intricate work. Firmly he proceeds to show what is wrong with them, and then goes on convincingly to present his own interpretation.

Briefly, he claims that the dialogue can be understood aright only if it is seen as a whole. To think of it as made up of two more or less unrelated halves, to see the eight "hypotheses" as rather random approaches to the problem of the One and the Many, is to be doomed to failure. The advancing dialectic of Plato's thought is to be seen as closely articulated and systematically developed. Thus the *Parmenides* can be most usefully studied as containing the basic principles of Platonic thinking.

To what extent Fr. Lynch's thesis will win acceptance we shall not know for some years. But it is certain that any new work on Plato will have to take account of this book. At a first reading it is most impressive and convincing.

*The Toscanini Legacy*, by Spike Hughes (Putnam 30s).

MR. HUGHES, who has a great and discerning admiration for Toscanini as having been an outstanding interpreter of music, and in particular of the works of Beethoven and Verdi, confesses that his main incentive in writing this book has been the fear lest the body of gramophone recordings of the Maestro's work may in the near future become unobtainable either in this country or in America. He is also concerned to show that the accusation so often brought against Toscanini that he "drove music too hard" is without foundation. Mr. Hughes produces a wealth of examples to prove that while undoubtedly Toscanini was apt to make people believe that they were hearing something played faster than in fact it was, all that he was really doing was "seeing what was there," or in other words adhering strictly to the composer's own indications as to tempo and expression. No one, after reading this book, can doubt that he has proved his point. The author is disarmingly frank about his own musical prejudices; he boldly admits to being allergic to Brahms, and he is shocked at his hero's acceptance of Gershwin's *American in Paris*. He has, moreover, some interesting things to say regarding Toscanini's comparative failure to deal with Mozart except in respect of *The Magic*

*Flute*. It was, he thinks, Mozart's peculiarly aristocratic quality and his mixing of *seria* and *buffa*, of comedy and tragedy, which was beyond the understanding of the Italian peasant mind, inclined to see everything as black or white. The book contains many other critical assessments, both witty and acute, which are well worth pondering, and among them the following: "When Toscanini first conducted Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis* in London I was a little surprised that it was not regarded, as the English still regard the Verdi *Requiem*, as a little too dramatic for local taste. On reflection I realized that, of course, Beethoven is a classic in England (he was German, after all, and therefore beyond suspicion), whereas Verdi is still suspected of a slight lack of musical breeding, being, when all is said and done, only an Italian."

*The Rebel Emperor*, by Lady Flavia Anderson (Gollancz 25s).

PROBABLY no one yet has tried to estimate the 1850-1865 rebellion in China from the religious point of view, we being characteristically concerned rather with its commercial aspect than with the death of maybe twenty million persons and why these occurred. Hung Hsiu-ch'uan did indeed make contact with Christianity, but chiefly by way of tracts and Scriptural texts translated by an American Protestant missionary and interpreted by himself in the sense that men being equal before God, he was a brother of Our Lord and entrusted with a crusade against the Manchu dynasty. He failed and duly committed suicide, having however so weakened the Manchus that in little more than a generation they were made an end of. So closely do we associate Gordon with Khartoum that it seems strange to find him appearing here as assisting the Government against the Taiping rebels. Lady Flavia has to rely on documents almost wholly other than Taiping, but while remaining objective and, so far as we can tell, non-partisan, she writes a most vivid account of a country and people which have not, we fear, changed their essential character. We hope Europe will not deal with them as if the only difference between them and us were a sallow skin.

*This Day*, by George Scott-Moncrieff (Hollis and Carter 9s 6d).

THIS DAY takes its cue from a remark of Père de Caussade: "The time which elapses before the end of the world is but a day, and this day is filled with Him." Under the symbol of this unit of time Mr. George Scott-Moncrieff considers the passage of man's life, sustained continuously by the divine will through the *hubris* of youth, the noonday devil of life in its prime, the spiritual doldrums of life's afternoon, to the calm of its evening and final close.

As a framework in which to present the writer's observations on

life and its relationship to the life of grace, the device is well chosen. It gives scope to that nice blend of imaginative insight and solid contact with reality which is characteristic of Mr. Scott-Moncrieff's vision; and in his valuable and perceptive introduction Fr. James Walsh, S.J., notes its justification in Biblical usage.

Those who are helped by the writings of Père de Caussade, Abbot Chapman and Thomas Merton will like this book. Its author has marked affinities with these writers, though his own work—intelligent, modest, and deeply spiritual—loses nothing of its own individuality thereby.

*Miniature Lives of the Saints*, compiled by Henry Sebastian Bowden of the Oratory. Edited and revised by Donald Attwater (Burns and Oates 18s).

THOSE who have cherished the two-volume edition of Fr. Bowden's *Miniature Lives* will welcome this well-bound and beautifully produced single volume which has been well "recast into a form more in consonance with the taste of his contemporaries" by Mr. Donald Attwater. Here one meets lives of St. Pius X and St. Teresa of Lisieux, but looks in vain for those of St. Dominic Savio and St. Maria Goretti among those canonised since 1877 when these lives were first published. Teachers in Catholic schools should be among the chief users of this useful little book which they will prefer to some of the more ponderous tomes on lives of the saints which have recently appeared. Fr. Martindale's talks on the B.B.C., published under the title *What are Saints?*, seem to have led to a veritable revival of English interest in hagiography, and this book ranks with Fr. Caraman's *Saints and Ourselves* and Fr. Aloysius Roche's *Bedside Books of the Saints* as indispensable to those who wish to answer the questions on the saints which come to all Catholic parents and teachers.

*The High Price of Paradise*, by Anne Ferrier (Hollis and Carter 13s 6d).

IN THIS SUPERBLY AMUSING and strangely comforting book Anne Ferrier, undaunted and devoted mother of ten children, shows us how to conquer the twin evils of self-pity and smugness. "The teenagers," she confesses, "could make you feel like 'Noah's Blues' and an Ibsen play all rolled into one;" her remedy was to keep up the supply of babies for dramatic relief. The book is full of the alarms and excursions of war-time motherhood, but it is the most cheerful commentary on family life that has ever come the way of the reviewer, who warmly recommends it for its tonic and mirth content to all and sundry, especially to the many harassed people who forget what Anne Ferrier always realised, that "fear not" are the words which

ought to be remembered all our lives, even when it comes to Atom Bombs and over-population problems.

*The Joyful Beggar*, by Louis de Wohl (Gollancz 16s).

C<sup>ELANO</sup>, Chesterton, Sabatier, Fr. Cuthbert, and now Mr. Louis de Wohl! This lively portrait of the Poverello of Assisi is a welcome addition to the host of biographies of St. Francis, and the background of the period is admirably portrayed by the wanderings of Roger, Duke of Vandria, in the service of Frederick, Duke of Sicily. The Lady Clare, too, lives in these vivid pages, and one wonders why the author has not turned his gift of writing forceful dialogue to the writing of plays in the manner of Laurence Housman. Mr. de Wohl's novels are extremely easy to read, but they must be fantastically difficult to write, and he uses his historical knowledge so skilfully that the environment of his characters never obtrudes on the vividness of their impact. St. Clare's aunt, Berta Guelfuccio, is a character memorable as Brother Giles, and his St. Francis is splendidly alive both before and after the crucifix speaks at San Damiano. A story-teller *par excellence*, it is fortunate that he should choose the saints for the subjects of his novels, and he reaches an ever-widening public.

*The Purple and the Scarlet*, by Guy Schofield (Harrap 15s).

T<sup>HIS IS A PLAIN</sup>, straightforward and reliable account of the history of early Christianity from the Crucifixion to the martyrdom of St. Polycarp. Mr. Schofield has made good use of the recognised sources, both Christian, Jewish and pagan, and the result is a readable story which can be recommended especially to those whose knowledge of the period is vague or scrappy. Professional scholars are not likely to find in the book much that they do not know already, but there is a growing number of people, outside the ranks of scholars, who will profit from a reading of it.

*Play it Cool, Sister*, by Lucile Hasley (Sheed and Ward 12s 6d).

M<sup>RS. HASLEY</sup> is compared, in the publishers' blurb, to James Thurber and J. S. Perelman. Without claiming to be an expert in the field, one can suggest that this is something of an injustice. Thurber and Perelman depend for their effects largely on the exaggeration that topples over into farce. Mrs. Hasley is too domesticated, too normal to go too far. If English readers look for a comparison, they might find it rather in Miss Seiriol Hugh Jones or Angela Milne. Anyway, as previous readers know, she is very funny. She is also a

funny Catholic—a devout Catholic who can look at her Church with a cocked eyebrow, the sort of look she turns on her husband and her family. (“Come to think of it, it *might* be interesting to spring ‘pusillanimity’ on one’s confessor, mightn’t it?” “What do you think of a fix-it-yourself husband who will absolutely *wreck* the place before calling professional help?”)

*Lamp in Jerusalem*, by Drayton Mayrant (World’s Work 16s).

THIS is the third in the “Biblical Novel Series.” Judging from the account of the first, dealing with Noah, and of the second, concerned with Sarai, Hagar and Ishmael, printed on the back flap of this book, the authoresses are expected to make contact here and there with the Biblical narrative, to be able to supply not a little oriental colouring, and then, give full rein to their imagination. Drayton Mayrant has a strong sense of Palestinian deserts and cultivated regions alike, of what can be surmised of household interiors, though oddly she does not make us see Solomon’s temple even from the outside. Her story concerns Zibia, wife of Ahaziah (Ochozias) and of his murderous pagan mother Athaliah, and is so noisy from the outset that one soon becomes exhausted. Impossible to live so long among shouts and screams. We think that the sober reticent accounts to be read in 2 (4) Kings are more dramatic for that very reticence, though maybe they do not sufficiently make us realise what the savagery and lustfulness of the cults of the Baals and the Eastern Goddess were. But the note of violence, so stridently struck, makes one wonder why anyone was left alive at all. The book, regrettably, is written in a pseudo-archaic style which is not even biblical.

*Modern German Drama*, by H. F. Garten (Methuen 21s).

MODERN GERMAN DRAMA gives a straightforward and comprehensive account of its subject from 1890 to the present day, including in its scope Austrian and Swiss German dramatic writing. Drama was always a more important art form in Germany than elsewhere in Western Europe, and its history is of consequently wider interest. Without much pause for more than momentary critical attention, the reader is introduced to all the outstanding plays of the various dramatic movements, from naturalism to Brecht and the post-war period. The classification of plays into groups is good, and the aims and characteristics of each movement and author are also briefly described, giving an excellent introduction to the whole field of modern German drama.



ONE of the great occupational risks of business life under the pressure of to-day is that the practical man of affairs neglects his outside reading, and all too easily falls into a narrow circle of immediate preoccupations. There is always loss in this, and the Catholic business or professional man, as a member of the Church Universal, has a particularly strong reason for keeping his mind open to wider horizons. Certainly it was never more necessary than now to follow world happenings. A direct chain of causes and effects ties every business to economical changes in the world, which are themselves as often the consequence as the cause of changes in men's political and social ideas. These ideas in their turn come out of the religions, or irreligions, of contemporary man.

In many countries the Catholic Church is at the heart of the battle of ideas. Cardinal Manning's saying that "all great quarrels between men are at bottom theological" suggests that there is, in fact, no better starting-point or background for understanding the modern world than a Catholic one. Because of this approach and background

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